

A
DISCOURSE
OF
Ecclesiastical Politie:

WHEREIN
The Authority of the Civil
Magistrate Over the Consciences
of Subjects in Matters of Religion
is Asserted;

The Mischiefs and Inconveniences
OF
Toleration

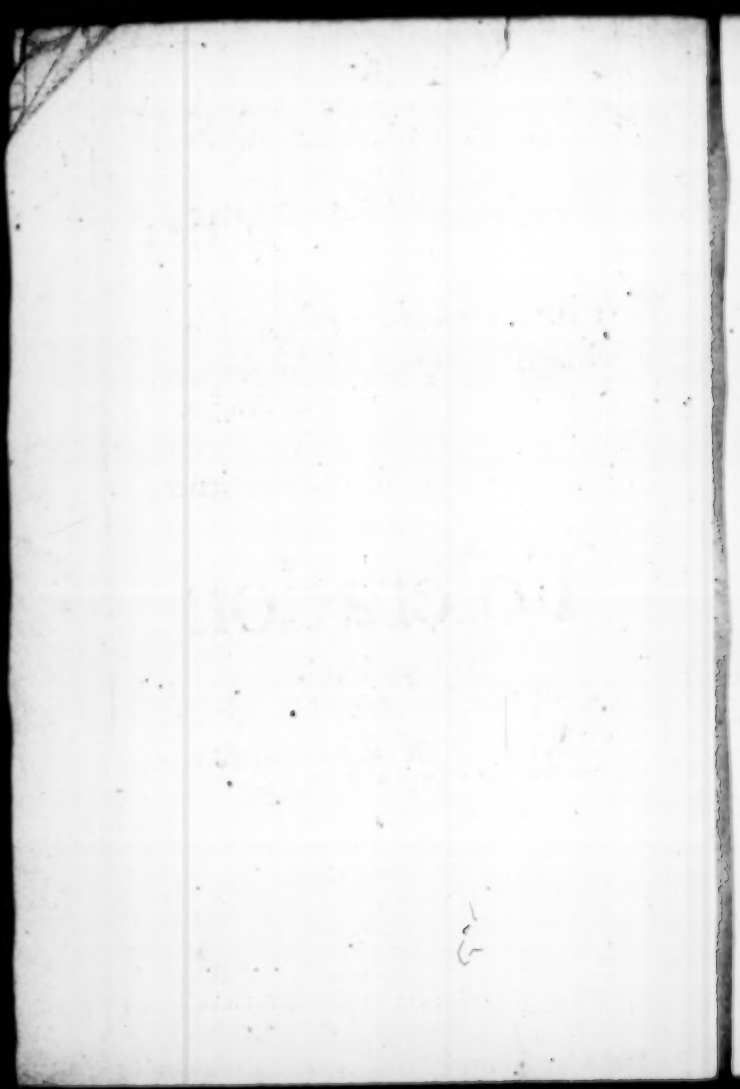
are Represented,
And All Pretences Pleaded in Behalf of
Liberty of Conscience
are Fully Answered.

Bp. Samuel Parker.

LONDON,

Bishop of Exeter

Printed for *John Martyn* at the Bell without
Temple-Bar, 1670.



The PREFACE TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Cannot Imagine any thing, that our Dissenting Zealots will be able to object against this Ensuing Treatise, unless perhaps in some Places the Vehemence and Severity of its Style ; for cavil I know they must : and if they can raise no Tolerable Exceptions against the Reasonableness of the Discourse itself, it shall suffice to pick quarrels with words and Phrases. But I will assure thee, the Author is a Person of such a tame and softly humour, and so cold a Complexion, that he thinks himself scarce capable of hot and passionate Impressions : and therefore if he has sometimes twisted Invectives with his Arguments, it proceeded not from Temper but from Choice ; and if there be any Tart and Upbraiding Expressions, they were not the Dictates of Anger or Passion, but of the Just and Pious Resentments of his Mind. And I ap-

peal to any Man, who knows upon what Sober Grounds and Principles the Reformation of the Church of England stands; and how that its Forms and Institutions are not only countenanced by the best and purest Times of Christianity, but establish'd by the Fundamental Laws of the Land; whether he can so perfectly Charm and Stupifie his Passions, as not to be chafed into some heat and briskness? when he seriously considers, that this Church so rightly constituted, and so duly Authorised should be so savagely worried by a wild and Fanatique Rabble; that this Church so soberly model'd, so warrantably reformed, and so handsomly settled, should have been so perpetually beleagueryed, and be yet not out of all danger of being rifled, if not utterly demolish'd by Folly and Ignorance; that the Publick Peace and Settlement of a Nation should be so wofully discomposed upon such slender and frivolous Pretenses, and that, after they have been so often and so shamefully baffled; that both Church and State should be so lamentably embroil'd by the Pride and Insolence of a few peevish ignorant and malepert Preachers; And lastly, that these Brain-sick People, if not prevented by some speedy and effectual

Etual Remedy, may in a little time grow to that Power and Confidence, as to be able (to use their own Language) to
** Shut the Heavens that they shall not rain, i. e. to restrain the Highest Powers of Church and State from their wonted Influence; and to have Power over the Waters to turn them into Blood, i. e. to turn the still People of a State or Nation into Warr and Blood: or, to speak in our own plain English, to Tye the Hands of Authority, to instigate the People of God to Rebellion, and once more involve the Kingdom in Blood and Confusion. Let the Reader consider all this, as thoroughly and seriously as I have done, and then be a Stoick if he can.*

But besides this, let any man, that is acquainted with the wisdom and Sobriety of True Religion, tell me, how 'tis possible not to be provoked to scorn and indignation against such proud, ignorant, and supercilious Hypocrites; who though they utterly defeat all the main Designs of Religion, yet boast themselves its only Friends and Patrons; signalize their Party by distinctive Titles and Characters of Godliness, and brand all others, howsoever Pious and

** Vide Continuation of the Friendly Debate, pag. 120, &c.*

Peaceable, with bad Names, and worse Suspicions? Who, I say, that loves and adores the Spirit of True Religion, can forbear to be sharp and severe to such thick and fulsom abuses? In that there is not any thing can so much expose or traduce true Piety, as this sort of Hypocrisie; because whilst Folly and Phantastry appears in the Vizard of Holiness, it makes that seem as ridiculous as it self. And hence the greatest Friends of True Goodness have always been the severest Satyrists upon False Godliness; and our Blessed Saviour scarce seemed more concern'd to Plant and Propagate Christianity, than to Explode the Pharisaick Hypocrisie, i. e. Religious Pride and Insolence.

I know but one single Instance, in which Zeal, or a high Indignation is just and warrantable; and that is when it vents it self against the Arrogance of haughty, peevish, and sullen Religionists, that under higher Pretenses to Godliness supplant all Principles of Civility and Good Nature; that strip Religion of its Outside to make it a Covering for Spight and Malice; that adorn their Peevishness with the Mask of Piety, and shroud their Ill Nature under the demure Pretenses of Godly Zeal; And
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stroke and applaud themselves as the only Darlings and Favourites of Heaven, and with a scornful pride disdain all the Residue of Mankind as a Rout of worthless and unregenerate Reprobates. Thus the only hot fit of Zeal we find our Saviour in, was kindled by an Indignation against the Pride and Insolence of the Jews, when he whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the outward Court of the Temple: For though they bore a blind and superstitious Reverence towards that part of it, that was peculiar to their own worship, yet as for the Outward Court, the place where the Gentiles and Profelytes worship't, that was so unclean and unhallowed, that they thought it could not be prophaned, by being turn'd into an Exchange of Usury. Now this Insolent Contempt of the Gentiles, and impudent Concept of their own holiness, provoked the mild Spirit of our Blessed Saviour to such an height of Impatience and Indignation, as made him with a seeming fury and transport of Passion whip the Tradesmen thence, and overthrow the Tables. So hateful is all proud, testy, and factious Zeal to a loving and Divine Temper of mind. And indeed what can we imagine more odious or mischievous than a spirit of Pride,

Peevishness, and Animosity adopted into the Service of God? This divides Religion into Factions and Parties, engenders a sullen and unsociable Niceness towards all that herd not with themselves, breeds nothing but rancour, malice, and envy, and every thing that is destructive of the Common Peace and Amity of Mankind. And when People Separate and Renouvouze themselves into distinct Sects and Parties, they always confine all their kind Influences to their own Faction, and look with a scornful and malignant Aspect upon all the rest of Mankind, become Enemies and Outlaws to Humane Society, and shatter in pieces that natural Peace and common Love, that preserves the Welfare and Tranquillity of Humane Nature. Their minds (like the salvage Americans) are as contracted as their Herds, and all that are not within the Fold of their Church, are without the Sphere of their Charity: this is intirely swallowed up within their own Combination, and 'tis no part of their duty to commiserate or supply the wants of the Unregenerate. As the Poet describes the Jewish Bigots,

Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti,

Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere Verpos.

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They would not so much as direct the way to any but a circumcised Brother, nor bestow a Cup of cold Water upon a Thirsty Samaritan. The Elect are confined to their own Party, and all besides are the Wicked and Reprobate of the Earth, hated of God, and unfit to be beloved by his People. And this possesses their minds with a holy Inhumanity; and then if the Saints ever get into Power, no Tyrant so cruel and butcherly; and they have the same esteem of the Wicked as of Insects or Vermin, and use them accordingly: But when they are out of Power, they are then forced to support their Malice with Slanders and Calumnies, and proud Comparisons: when they meet and gossip together, How do they congratulate each other, that they are not as this or that Formalist? and the greatest part of their Idle Tattle is usually spent either in Censuring or Pitying, or Slandering some of their Neighbours, as poor carnal and unconverted Wretches. And when they deign to converse with the Unregenerate and Men of the World, i. e. all out of their own Row, they make them keep their Distance, and the Language of their Deportment is that of their Predecessors in the Prophet Isaiah: Stand by thy self, come

come not near to me ; for I am holier than thou. *In brief, who ever is proud and conceited upon the score of Religion, naturally falls into the most salvage insolence and baseness of Nature, and is utterly incapable of being either good Subject, or good Neighbour.*

Now to last these morose and churlish Zealots with smart and twingeing Satyrs is so farr from being a criminal Passion, that 'tis a zeal of Meekness and Charity, and a prosecution of the grand and diffusive duty of humanity, and proceeds only from an earnest desire to maintain the common Love and Charity of Mankind. And though Good manners oblige us to treat all other sorts of People with gentle and civil Language ; yet when we have to do with the Scribes and Pharisees, we must point our Reproofs with sharp Invectives, we must discover them to themselves to humble them ; we must lance their Tumour, and take out the Core of their proud Flesh before we can cure them ; Anodyns and softer Medicines make no Impressions upon them, to treat them smoothly does but feed the humour ; soft and tender words do but tempt their Disdain, and sooth up their Vanity ; they think you flatter and fawn upon

upon them, if you speak them fair, your Civility they will interpret Respect, and a forced Esteem of their Godliness. They know that you and the Rest of the World hate the People of God, and would use them basely and inhumanely; but that the greatness of their Piety gives check to your Malice, and in spight of all your outrageous Passion against them, extorts a more gentle Usage, if not a secret Love and Veneration. But beside, that soft Reproofs do but cocker their Presumption, they would suffer true Goodness to be run down by the violence of Ignorance and Zeal. And to think-to argue rude and boysterous Zealots out of their folly meerly by the strength of calm and sober Reason, is as likely a matter as to endeavour by fair words to perswade the Northern Wind into a Southern Point. If you will ever silence them, you must be as, vehement, as they: nothing but Zeal can encounter Zeal. And he that will oppose the Pharisees, must do it with their Eagerness, though not their Malice. Clamour and Confidence make stronger Impressions upon the common People, than strength of Reason; and the Rabble ever runs to that Party, that raises the biggest noise. And therefore seeing we
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are not so ill-bred, as to oppose Clamour to Clamour; we must supply our want of Noise and Throat (as our Saviour did in his *Invectives* against the Pharisees) by Sharpness and Severity. And though there is but little ground to hope that the keenest Reasons should be able to pierce their thick and inveterate Prejudices; yet however the sharper edge they have, the deeper they will stick in the minds of those, whose Concern and Interest it is to Punish and Correct them. For I am not so vain as to design, or expect their own Conviction: as good attempt the Removal of Mountains, as of some mens Scraples. And I remember the Italian Proverb, *Chi lava la Testa al Asino perde il Sapone*. And therefore I never proposed to myself any other aim in this following Discourse, than, by representing the palpable inconsistency of Fanatique Tempers and Principles with the Welfare and security of Government, to awaken Authority to beware of its worst and most dangerous Enemies, and to force them to that Modesty and Obedience by severity of Laws, to which all the strength of Reason in the world can never persuade them.

When I first resolved upon this Undertaking

taking, the Main Design in my Thoughts, was to represent to the world the lamentable Folly and Silliness of these mens Religion, and to shew what pitiful and incompetent Guides of their Actions their own Consciences are; and that to leave them to the Government of their own Perswasions, is only to deliver them up to be abused by all manner of Vices and Follies; and that when they have debauch't their minds with Pride, Ignorance, Self-love, Ambition, Peevishness, Malice, Envy, Surlinefs, and Superstition, &c. they then bestow the Authority and Sacredness of Conscience upon their most violent, boisterous, and ungovernable Passions: In brief, that their Consciences are seized on by such morose and surly Principles, as make them the rudest and most barbarous People in the world; and that in comparison of them, the most insolent of the Pharisees were Gentlemen, and the most salvage of the Americans Philosophers. But in this Design I found my self, happily prevented by a late Learned and Ingenious Discourse, The Friendly Debate, that has unravel'd all their affected Phrases with so much Perspicuity of wit, discovered the Feebleness of their beloved Notions with
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so much Clearness of Reason, demonstrated the wilfulness of their Practices by so many pregnant and undeniable Testimonies, exposed the palpable unwarrantableness of their Schism, the shameful Prevarication of their Pretenses, and utter inconsistency of their Principles with Publick Peace and Settlement; and in brief, so evidently convicted the Leaders in the Faction of such inexcusable Knavery, and their followers of such a dull and stubborn simplicity; that 'tis impossible any thing should hold out against so much force of Reason and Demonstration, but invincible Impudence and Obstinacy: And when men insconce themselves in their own wills, they are there Impregnable. Wilfulness is enchanted Armour, upon which the sharpest Steel makes no Impression; and they are secure from the Power of Conviction, that are unalterably resolved never to be convinced. Otherwise nothing could be more apparent to any man (that has but a competent knowledge of the Nature of the things there debated) that never any Cause in the World was more shamefully baffled and triumphed over, than this of Schismatical Non-conformity. And though it has gaul'd them into an implacable rage and indignation (for that,

as Solomon observes, is the humour of some sorts of men, to rage and be confident, when they are convinced) yet in spite of Affronts and Provocations, it has found them a tame and patient People, that can generously endure to see themselves so smartly pelted for their Folly and Villany, and never so much as snarl, or attempt to fasten upon those weapons, that have so sorely bruised them: And as for those little Cattle that have been so hardy as to nibble at a Reply, they have only put us in mind of the old Fable of the Serpent and the File, and have proved nothing but the strength of their Folly, and weakness of their Teeth; and all of them may wear their Fangs to the Roots, before they make any Impression upon the Body of the Discourse.

The main and most popular Objection, I could ever meet with against it, is its form and method, viz. its being written in way of Dialogue; in which way of writing (they say) a witty man may make any thing look as uncouth and ridiculous as he pleases. And this is true, in absurd and inartificial Dialogues; but when they are skilfully contrived (as this is) there is no way of arguing more smart and convictive: For the Design of such Composesures is to represent
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the Authors own thoughts upon occasion of something affirm'd or intimated by the Counter-party; and therefore if his own Discourse be rational and concluding, there is nothing more required to that of the other Party, than that his talk be agreeable to the Pretenses of those men he Personates: So that if the Authors own Arguments and Opinions (that are the Substance of the Treatise) be unreproueable, 'tis not material how wise his Adversaries Discourse is, so it be not false. Neither would he require them to defend and justify every thing that is said in the Person of the Non-conformist (for many things are collateral, and only design'd to set off his Reasonings with a comical humour and pleasantness) but only to reply to the Scope and Substance of his Book by justifying their own Notions that he has confuted, and by confuting those that he has asserted. which unless they shew themselves able to perform, they must acknowledg he has perfectly shamed their Folly, and unmask's their Hypocrisie.

But besides, this being but a general Exception, must by the Laws of Reasoning pass not only for a precarious but a false Cavil, till it is proved by some particular Instances;

Instances, & neither needs nor admits of any other Reply, than barely to challenge them to alledge any thing of moment in their own behalf about the particular matters there debated, that he has not sufficiently represented: If in any thing considerable he has been disingenuous, let them point it out; but if they cannot, let them not think to satisfy the world, by objecting what they confess they cannot prove, because they do not. 'Tis true indeed, the speeches of the Non-conformist are not so large and copious as his Adversaries, because his part consists mainly in hinting Doubts and Objections, which must of necessity be in all Forms of Arguing much shorter than their just and satisfactory Replies; especially when they are not barely answered, but confused too: And therefore considering the difference of the Parts of the Dialogue, he has as clearly represented their sense as his own; and if all he says for them were composed into one continued Speech, it would be no easie matter to discern it from one of their own Discourses.

But the thing that really grieves them, is, that in this method he has stop't all their Subterfuges, as he proceeds, by preventing their shifiting of Phrases, and hiding themselves in a maze of words; For, whereas 'tis their usual Artifice to tire

put the Wise, and amuse the Simple, by rowling up and down in canting and ambiguous Expressions, he has been at the pains to ferret them from Phrase to Phrase, and never left his pursuit till they were left quite naked and defenceless, and without one cranny whereby to make an escape: In so much, that they can never be able to return any tolerable Answers to one part of his Treatise, that are not already prevented in another.

But that which chiefly tempts less discerning People to suspect some partiality, is, that the Discourse of the Non-Conformist looks all along so simply; though for that they ought to consider, that 'tis no wonder if Non-sense run so lamely, when Truth and Reason tread so close upon its heels; and the babble of a Fool never appears so fulsom, as when he discourses with a Philosopher; 'tis the smartness and perspicuity of the Reply, that makes their folly so transparent: Remove the Conformist, and then the other talks at as wise a rate, as any of their own Writers.

But I beg the Readers pardon, for having so much tyred his patience with satisfying the Cavils and Impertinencies of these People; when I am so well assured that they are incapable either of being asbamed or argued out
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of their Follies. 'Tis one thing to Baffle, and another to Convince them. And where they want stores of Reason to Encounter an Adversary, they never want Magazines of Reproaches: And therefore I shall only advise that excellent person, the Author of the Debate, to be careful how he lays aside his Vizour; for if ever they discover him, let him look to be pelted to purpose with Slanders, and blasting Reports: and though he be a person of the clearest and most unspotted Innocence, that is no fence against the foulest Aspersions; but if they ever find out the place of his Residence, let him assure himself, they will quickly find the next Dunghil to it, how clean soever he sweeps his own Door.


As for my own part I am hardned enough to be proof against the poison of Asps, the Stings of Vipers, and the Tongues of—— and rest satisfied in this, that they can never abuse me more than they are pleased to abuse themselves; it being the most solemn strain of their Devotion to vilifie themselves with large Confessions of the hainousest and most aggravated Sins: they will freely acknowledge their Offences against all the Commands, and that with the foulest and most enhancing Circumstances they can rake together, and confess their Injustice, Unclean-

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ness, and Extortion, and all the Publican and Harlot Sins in the world: In brief, in all their Confessions they stick not to charge themselves with such large Catalogues of Sin, and to amass together such an heap of Impieties, as would make up the completest Character of Lewdness and Villany. And if their Consciences do really Arraign them of all those Crimes, whereof they so familiarly endite themselves, there are no such guilty and unpardonable Wretches as they. So that their Confessions are either true, or false: if false, then they fool and trifle with the Almighty; if true, then I could easily tell them the fittest place to say their Prayers in. But however 'tis pity to abridge them the liberty all men have, to abuse themselves: but if they will extend this their Priviledge so far, as to attaint other mens Reputations, I shall only admonish them as a Friend beforehand, that there is some body in the world that will not fail to requite their Slanders, and false aspersions, with their own true Character. And so I take my leave of them, to address my self to those for whom this Discourse was intended. And though I dare not be so sawcy as to teach my Superiours, how to Govern the Kingdom, out of Ezekiel, or the Revelations; yet I will presume to put up this single Petition, in
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order to the security of our Publick Peace and Settlement.

That whatsoever Freedom they may think good to Indulge to Religion, they would not suffer Irreligion to share in the Favour, nor permit Atheism to appear openly (as it begins to do) under the Protection of Liberty of Conscience. I am not so utterly unacquainted with the Experience of former Ages, as to be over-apt to complain of the degeneracy of our own: the World I know has ever had its Vicissitudes, and Periods of Vertue and Wickedness: and all Common-wealths have advanced themselves to their Power and Grandeur by Sobriety and Wisdom, and a tender Regard of Religion; and from thence have declined again by Softness and Effeminacy, by Sacrilege and Prophaneness, and a proud Contempt of God and his Worship. This is the Circle of Humane Affairs, and on these constant Turns depend the Periods and certain Fates of Empires. So that though Atheism reigns and prevails more in the present Age, than in some that went immediately before it; yet there have been seasons, when it was mounted up to a greater height of Power and Reputation, than 'tis yet advanced to: but then those have always been black and fatal Times, and have cer-
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tainly brought on Changes and Dissolutions of States. For the Principles of Irreligion unjoynt the Sinews, and blow up the very Foundations of Government: This turns all sense of Loyalty into Folly; this sets men at Liberty from all the effectual Obligations to Obedience, and makes Rebellion as vertuous, when-ever it either is, or is thought as advantageous.

And therefore it imports Authority to nip this Wanton Humour in the Bud, and to crush it whilst 'tis young and tender; for as yet it has found but slender entertainment with wise and Sober Persons, and is only propagated among little and unlearned People: discreet men that have not more Religion, have yet at least more Wit and Manners. The only Zealots in the Cause are the young Nurslings, and small Infantry of the Wits, the wild and hair-brain'd Youths of the Town. A sort of Creatures that study nothing but Sloth and Idleness, that design nothing but Folly and Extravagance, that aspire to no higher Accomplishments than fine Phrases, terse Oaths, and gay Plumes, that pretend to no other stock of Learning, but a few shavings of Wit gather'd out of Plays and Comedies; and these they abuse too, and labour to pervert their chaste Expressions to Obscene and Irreligious Purposes; and

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Johnson and Fletcher are prophaned, as well as the Holy Scriptures. They measure the wit of their Discourse, by its Prophane-ness and Ribaldry; and nothing sets it off so handsomely as neat and fashionable Oaths: their wit lies in their Impudence, and they have nothing to make them appear more witty than other Folk, but their daring to be more wicked: Their Jest is remarkable for nothing but their Presumption, and the picquancy of their Conceit lies in their Boldness. Men laugh not so much at the wit, as the Sawciness of their Discourse; and because they dare vent such things, as a discreet or Civil man would scorn to say, though he were an Atheist. But these Fools are Proud and Ambitious to gain a Name and Reputation for Debauchery, they slander themselves with false Impieties, and usurp the Wickednesses they were never guilty of, only to get a Renown in Villany.

'Tis these Apes of Wit, and Pedants of Gentility that would make Atheism the fashion forsooth, and Prophane-ness the Character of a Gentleman; that think it a piece of Gallantry to scoff at Religion, droll upon God, and make sport with his Laws; that account it an Argument of Judgment
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and Ingenuity, to be above the Follies of Conscience; and a height of Courage and Magnanimity, at all adventure to brave and defie Heaven, and out-dare the Almighty; and the noblest part of a gentile Behaviour, to counterfeit an Haughty and Supercilious Disdain of Religious Sneaks; and to beg all men that are respective to their Consciences, for soft and cowardly Fools, that are scared with Phantastick and Invisible Powers, and easily abused with Tricks, and Juglings, and Publick Tales. Now certainly, these Phantastick Changelings must needs be wonderfully qualified, to judg of the most serious and most difficult Enquiries in the world. Are they not likely (think you) to search into the deepest Foundations of Religion, to weigh and examine all the Arguments for the Being of God, and Immortality of the Soul; to enquire into the Grounds of the Christian Faith, and to take an account of the Truth and Credibility of the Scriptures? And, when they have so utterly emasculated their Understandings, with Softness and Luxury, are they not prodigiously able to examine what Agrees or Quarrels with the Dictates of Pure and Impartial Reason? Are they not likely to determine what is truly Great
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and Generous, that never heard of any other Maxims of Philosophy, but what they have pick'd up at Plays, out of the stiff Disputes of Love and Honour? And are they not likely to give a wonderful Account of the Records of Ancient Times, (without which they are utterly unable to judge of the Truth or Falshood of any Religion) that were never acquainted with any History, unless perhaps that of the Follies, and Amours of the French Court? And yet how briskly do these giddy Youths determine these, and a thousand other Difficult Theories, that they never had Learning or Patience enough to understand, much less to make an exact and satisfying search into their Truth and Evidence?

Alas young men! you are too rash and forward, your Confidence swells above your Understandings? 'Tis not for you to pretend to Atheism, 'tis too great a Priviledge for Boys and Novices. 'Tis sauciness for you to be Prophane, and to censure Religion Impudence and ill Manners: and whatsoever Rational Pleas Atheism may admit of, 'tis not for such as you to pretend to wit and Learning enough to understand them. And therefore take heed of exposing your Vanity and Weakness; and, if you will not be wise, yet

at least be Modest: Be advised, not to set up before your time, and better to furnish your Understandings, before you vent your Wit. Consider, what a fulsome thing it is, that when the most Learned and Inquisitive of the Philosophers could never raise Atheism above the certainty of a Grand Perhaps; and therefore denyed not, but only doubted, the Truth of Religion: For none of them could ever be so utterly forsaken of his Reason, as to attempt to demonstrate there could be no God: but only by shewing how, to solve the Phanomena of Nature and Providence without him, that possibly there might be none: and therefore they were never so absurd, as to affront the worship of the Deity; but thought themselves as effectually obliged in Prudence to the Duties of Vertue and Religion by the Possibility, as by the Certainty of things. Now I say, when these men of Parts and Learning were so Modest, and Diffident in their singular Perswasions; what an unhandsome thing is it for such empty Fops as you, with so bold and frontless a Confidence, to Desie the Almighty, to Deride the Wisdom of his Laws, to Cavil at his Sacred Oracles, and to give the Lye to the Universal Sense of Mankind; and all this at all adventure?

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And yet, methinks, 'tis pretty to hear one of these little Musbrome Wits, charge Religion with Credulity and easiness of Belief; and talk confidently, that 'tis want of Judgment and Enquiry that betrays Fools and Ignorant People to be scared with the Tales and Threatnings of Ambitious Priests: though it be so utterly impossible that any men should be more chargeable with Credulity, than themselves; and no man's Faith is capable of being more implicit, than their Unbelief; nor can the most illiterate Peasant take up his Countrey's Religion upon more slender Grounds and Motives, than they do their Infidelity: their being equally Ignorant forces them to be equally Credulous. For, not to repeat any of the forementioned particulars, with what a greedy Confidence do they swallow down the Principles of the Malmsbury Philosophy, without any chewing, or consideration? How huffingly will they assert, that the Notion of an Immaterial Substance implyes a Contradiction, for no other Reason, than because it does? That men have no Faculties but of Sense and Imagination; that Understanding is Reaction, and Reason a Train of Phantasmes, that the Will is a Corporeal Motion, that its determinations are Fatal and Mechanical, and

necessitated by the Impressions of external and irresistible Causes; that its Liberty of choice is as absurd and insignificant Nonsense, as a round Quadrangle; that Religion is the Belief of Tales publickly allowed; that Power is Right, and justifies all Actions whatsoever, whether good or bad; that there is nothing just, or unjust in it self; that all Right, and Wrong is the Result of Humane Contracts; and that the Laws of Nature are nothing but Maxims and Principles of meer self-interest! How boldly do they take up with these and other resembling Principles of Baseness and Irreligion, upon the bare Authority and proofless Assertions of one proud and haughty Philosopher? How much severe Study and Contemplation is required to a Competent Knowledge of these things? And yet with what a stiff and peremptory Confidence are they determined by these men, that cannot pretend to any other knowledge, (and 'tis a very candid presumption to allow them so much) than of the Laws of a Play, or Poem? In brief, these empty Sponges suck in Opinions, for their agreeableness with their debauch'd and licentious Practices, without ever considering their Truth and Evidence: for alas? they never troubled their heads with such Enquiries

vies: And therefore, whatever they pretend, 'tis not their Reasons, but their Lusts and Vices, that cavil at the Principles of Religion; and they except against it, not because it contradicts their understandings, (for that they never considered) but their Appetites: 'tis their Sins and sensual Inclinations, that prejudice and bar up their minds against it: and though they were convinced of its Truth, they would however be Infidels still, in spite of all the Reason and Demonstration in the world. Their Irreligion is an after-game of their Debauchery, they are forced to it in their own Defense. Their wickedness has made Infidelity their Interest, and Atheism their Refuge; and then they can not, will not believe, for no other Reason, but only because they dare not.

But that I may not pursue their Ignorance too unmercifully, I will venture, before I conclude, to commend their skill: For I cannot but acknowledge them guilty of one little piece of Art and Sophistry, viz. That being Conscious to themselves, that no tolerable exceptions can be raised against the Principles of True Goodness, they affect to reproach it with forged and disingenuous Aspersions, and wittingly disparage its native Beauty and Loveliness, by representing

it in false and uncouth Disguises. For, whereas there is nothing more noble and generous, more chearful and sprightly, more courteous and affable, more free and ingenuous, more sober and rational, - than the Spirit and Genius of true Religion; these witty Gentlemen are pleased to paint it out in sad and melancholy Shapes, with poor and wretched Features, with soure and anxious Looks, as an enemy to all Mirth and Chearfulness, and a thing that delights in nothing but Sighs, and Groans, and discoloured Faces: They dress it up in all the Follies and Deformities of Superstition; and then, when they have made it ridiculous, they make themselves sport with it: And thus by representing it as a humour unworthy the entertainments of a generous mind, that justifies their contempt of so weak a Passion, and makes a sumptuous Apology for the Gallantry of Atheism and Prophaneness. And indeed, if Religion were as mean and absurd, as these men would make it, and others have made it, let it not only excuse but abet their practices; let it be the mark of an high and gallant Spirit, to be an Atheist; let it be Gentility to despise, and wit to droll upon Religion; let all Devotion be esteemed the Child of Folly and Weakness;

let it be an Argument of Wisdom, to be prophane and vitious, and let Vertue become a name of the greatest Reproach and Infamy. But alas! when 'tis so demonstratively evident, that true Piety (though it were an Impostor) is our greatest wisdom and perfection; that it both adorns, and advances Humane Nature; that it is so highly advantageous to the peace and happiness of the world; that it carries in it all that is amiable and lovely, all that is chearful and ingenuous, all that is useful and profitable; and that 'tis whatever can advance either our Content, or Interest, or Reputation: when all this is so amply evident, what can be more unpardonably base and disingenuous, than for these men, in spite of all Remonstrances, still to upbraid it with the Villanies of Hypocrisie, and blast its Credit with the Absurdities of Superstition? which is the greatest folly in the world, for no other reason, than because it debauches what is the greatest wisdom. And therefore they would do well to understand a little better what Religion means, before they take upon them to disgrace and defame it: and let them not discover their lamentable rawness and ignorance, by laughing at its folly and meanness, till they can first prove a

base and selfish spirit to be more noble and generous, than an universal Love and Charity; Pride and Luxury to be more amiable than Sweetness and Ingenuity; furious Revenge and Impatience more honourable than Discretion and Civility; Excess and Debauchery more healthful than Temperance and Sobriety; to be enslaved to their Lusts and Passions more manly, than to live by the Rules of Reason and Prudence; Malice and Injustice to be more graceful and becoming a gentile Behaviour, than Kindness and Benignity; and the horrors of an amazed Spirit to be fuller of Pleasure and Felicity, than that Peace and Calmness of Mind that springs from the Reflections of an exact Conscience. Till all this and much more is made good, that is, till all the Maxims of Folly and Wisdom are changed, let them be civil, and modest, and not scorn too confidently. And though all this could be done, yet, as for their parts they will be so far from ever performing it, that they will never be at the pains of attempting it; and if they should, 'tis (God knows) too great a work for their little understandings. And therefore I appeal to all the wise and sober world, whether they that would make Religion ridiculous, are not infinitely so them-

themselves? whether to confute it with Raillery and Bold Jest, be not as void of Wit as Reason? And whether all the Folly and Madness in the World can equal this of these scoffing Atheists?

And thus having scourged their Ignorance and Presumption with severity enough, I shall forbear either to expose them for their Pedantry, or to lash them for their rudeness and ill manners: though what can be more pedantick, than to be so big with every little Conceit, as to be in labour to vent it in every Company: And a pert School-boy is scarce more troublesome with a petty Criticism against Mr. Lilly, than these trewantly Youths are with any singular Exception, that they have pick'd up against the Holy Scriptures. They cannot meet with a person of any Reputation for Learning, but they must be pecking at him with their Objections; and if he slight their impertinent Pratings (as all discreet men do) then the next time they meet their Dear Hearts, with what triumphant Shrugs do they boast their success against the man in Black, and so laugh and drink themselves into Confidence and Folly! And then, as for their want of manners, what deportment can be more course and clownish
than

than to affect to be offensive to all discreet men, and to delight to loath and nauseate all Civil Company with the filthiness of their Discourse? A behaviour more irksom to a Gentleman of any Breeding and Civility, than the Buffoonry of Hostlers and Porters. They can scarce meet with a Clergy-man, but they must be pelting him with Oaths, or Ribaldry, or Atheistical Drollery; i.e. they study to annoy him with such Discourse, as he is obliged (though he were inwardly as great a Villain as themselves) to detest by his place and Profession: a piece of Breeding much like his, that would have refused to entertain a Vestal with any other Discourse, than by describing the Rites of Priapus, or the lascivious Arts of Cleopatra.

And so I leave them to the Correction of the Publick Roas: and 'tis high time that Authority check, and chastise the wantonness of this Boyish Humour. For the Infection spreads and grows fashionable, and creeps out of Cities into Villages. To impeach Religion is become the first exercise of Wit, in which young Gentlemen are Disciplined; and Atheism is the only knowledge and accomplishment they gain by a gentile Education; and they have nothing to make them fancy themselves more witty and refined

finest People, than illiterate Peasants and Mechanicks, but a readiness and pregnancy to rally upon Religion: and he is a raw Youth, and smells ranck of his Grandame and his Catechism, that cannot resolve all the Articles of his Faith into the Cheats and Impostures of Priests. And thus they live here till they have sinned, or fooled away all sense of Honour and Conscience; and so return home, useless and unserviceable to their Countrey; and if they turn Sots, they may prove less dangerous: but if not, they are prepared for any designs of Mischief and Publick Disturbance. For at the same time they shake hands with Religion, they bid adieu to Loyalty; in that, whilst they own no ties of Conscience, they know no honesty but Advantage; and Interest is the only endearment of their Duty to their Prince: and therefore, when-ever this happens to run counter to their Loyalty, 'tis then the strongest and most effectual inducement to any attempts of Treason, and Rebellion. And thus they may prove good Subjects, as Rogues and Out-laws are, who will be honest when 'tis their Interest; but when 'tis not, then any thing is their Duty, that contributes to their Security. And with these men in all Civil Wars and Dissentions
of

of State, the strongest side has always the justest Cause; and if Rebels prove successful against their Lawful Prince, they gain their Assistance. And to these Principles we must ascribe the unhappy success of the late Rebellion: the silly and well-meaning Zealots were only abused by sly and crafty Incendiaries for the compassing of their own ambitious ends, and by their Councils only was the Cause managed, advanced, and finished; till they raised their own Fortunes upon the Ruines of the Royal Interest, and establish'd themselves in the Royal Power, and Dignity. And though the men and their Designs are perish'd, yet their Principles thrive and propagate; and 'tis strange, yet easie to observe, how the contempt of Religion works men into a dislike of Monarchy: and I scarce ever met with any zealous Commonwealths-man, whom I could not easily discover to have more of the Atheist than the Politician. In brief, all men of this Perswasion are so far from being inclined to love their Prince, that they are engaged by their very Principles to hate the Usurper: For, take away the Divine Institution of Government, and the Obligations of Conscience to Obedience, and then all Government is Usurpation, and all sense of Obedience

dience Folly; and Princes have no other Right to their Crowns, but what is founded upon Force and Violence; their Empire was first gain'd by Wars, Butcheries, and Massacres; their Diadems hang upon their Swords; and their Thrones stand deep in Humane Blood; and all Kingdoms are nothing but Societies of Slaves and Tyrants; and if any Subject can set himself free from his Sovereigns Oppression, he is the braver man; and when he can win his Crown, he deserves to wear it. And there is no man that laughs at the Folly of Religion, who is not angry at the Superstition of Government. And therefore I leave it to Authority to consider, how much it concerns them, to restrain the Insolence of this Wanton Humour; and to punish those, who make it their business to propagate Irreligious Principles, as the worst and most dangerous Enemies to the State.

But my Scorn and Indignation against the presumptuous lavishness of these redoubted Wights swells this Preface to too large and tedious a length; and therefore, I shall only crave leave to premise this one caution for the advantage of the ensuing Treatise, and so have done; viz. That in the management of this Debate, I have been careful to confine my Discourse to the weightiest and
most

most material Considerations, and have industriously waved all matters of an inferior and subordinate Importance. For to what purpose is it to examine every little Exception, and every gay and plausible Appearance; when the Enquiry is so clearly determinable, by Arguments of the greatest Evidence and Concernment? And therefore I have only represented the inconsistency of Liberty of Conscience, with the first and Fundamental Laws of Government. In which if I have spoken Reason, I have, without any more ado, carried the Cause; if I have not, I am content to lose my labour. For there are no Considerations of equal Evidence and Importance with those that relate to the Peace and Settlement of Societies: So that, if those I have urged prove ineffectual, all others, drawn from less considerable Topicks, would have been impertinent; and so far from strengthening my Discourse, that they would rather have abated of its demonstrative Truth and Evidence: for being in their own natures not capable of such enforcing and convictive Proofs, to mix them with clearer and more certain Reasonings, were only to allay their strength, and dilute their perspicuity.

And for this Reason have I purposely omitted

ted the Examination of that Argument, that so strongly possesses the warm and busie brains of some undertaking men, viz. that Liberty of Conscience would be mightily conducive to the Advancement of Trade: For whether it be so, or so, it matters not, after it is proved to be apparently destructive of the Peace of Kingdoms. And though perhaps it might be no difficult task to prove the vanity of their Conceit, yet, after this performance, it would be at least a trifling and frivolous undertaking; because no man can be so utterly forsaken of all Reason and Discretion, as to think of promoting Traffick by any ways that are destructive of the Ends and Interests of Government. And therefore, if I have sufficiently proved, that Liberty of Conscience is so; 'tis but an idle speculation after that to enquire, what service it would do to the advancement of Trade: because 'tis already proved inconsistent with a greater Good, than all the advantages of Commerce can amount to. So that granting these Projecting People all they can demand, and supposing their Design as serviceable to the benefits of Trade, as they pretend; yet, what can be more shamefully imprudent, than to put the Kingdom upon so great an hazard for so small an advan-

advantage? Certainly Publick Peace and Settlement (that is the first and Fundamental end of all Societies) is to be valued above any advantages of Wealth and Trading: and therefore, if Liberty of Conscience as naturally tends to the disturbance of Government, as it can to the advancement of Trade (if any thing may be supposed to contribute to the wealth of a Nation that tends to the dissolution of its Peace) so vast a mischief must infinitely outweigh this, and a thousand other lesser advantages: For there is nothing in the world of value enough to balance against Peace, but it self.

And therefore I confess I cannot but smile when I observe how some, that would be thought wonderfully grave and solemn Statesmen, labour with mighty Projects of setting up this and that Manufacture, in their severall respective Towns and Corporations; and how eagerly they pursue these petty Attempts beyond the great Affairs of a more Publick and Universal Concernment; and how wisely they neglect the Settlement of a whole Nation, for the benefit of a Village or Burrough. If indeed the Affairs of the Kingdom were in a fix'd and establish'd condition, these Attempts might then have been seasonable; and the enriching of particular

ticular places would be an Accession to the wealth and Power of the whole Kingdom. But whilst we are distracted among our selves, with such a strange variety of Jealousies and Animosities; whilst the Publick Peace and Settlement is so unluckily defeated by Quarrels and Mutinies of Religion; and whilst the Consciences of men are acted by such peevish and ungovernable Principles; to erect and encourage Trading Combinations, is only to build so many nests of Faction and Sedition, and to enable these giddy and humourfome People to create publick Disturbances. For 'tis notorious, that there is not any sort of People so inclinable to Seditious Practices as the Trading part of a Nation; and their Pride and Arrogance naturally increases with the improvement of their stock. And, if we reflect upon our late miserable Distractions, 'tis easie to observe, how the Quarrel was chiefly hatch'd in the Shops of Tradesmen, and cherish'd by the Zeal of Trentice-boys, and City-gossips. And hence it is, that the Fanatick Party appears so vastly numerous and considerable, above and beyond their real number, partly because these bold and giddy People live in greater Societies of men, and so are more observable; whereas in Country Towns and Villages their account is inconsiderable, and arises not (to speak within compass) above the proportion of one to twenty; and partly be-

cause in those places where these Vermin naturally breed and swarm, they are always most talkative, and clamorous, and full of Buzz: and therefore, though their party be much the least, and the meanest Interest; yet whilst their number is conjectured by their noise, they make a greater Appearance, than twice as many sober and peaceable men. Riots and Tumults are much more remarkable, than Societies of quiet and composed People; and a rout of unlucky Boys and Girls raise a greater noise (especially when they wrangle among themselves) than all the Parish beside. But whether they are more or less considerable, 'tis a very odd and preposterous piece of Policy, to design the enriching of this sort of people, whilst their heads are distemper'd with Religious Lunacies; for it only puts weapons into the hands of Madmen, wherewith they may assault their Governours. Their Fundamental Principles incline them to perverse and restless Dispositions, that never are, nor will be, satisfied with any establish'd frame of things: and if the Affairs of Religion are not exactly model'd to their own nice and peremptory Conceptions, that is ground enough to overturn the present Settlement, and to new model the Church by a more thorough Reformation. Now whilst men are under the power of this proud and peevish humour, wealth does but only pamper and encourage their Presumption

sumption, and tempt them to a greater boldness and insolence against Authority. And if their Seditious Preachers do but blow the Trumpet to Reformation (i. e. to have every thing alter'd they dislike, how easily may they fire these heady people into tumults and outrages? How eagerly will they flow into their Party in spight of all the Power and Opposition of their Governors? And how prodigally will they empty their Bags, and bring in even their Bodkins, and Thimbles, and Spoons to carry on the Cause? He is a very silly man, and understands nothing of the Follies, Passions, and Inclinations of Humane Nature, who sees not that there is no Creature so ungovernable, as a Wealthy Fanatick.

And therefore let not men flatter themselves with idle hopes of Settlement, any other way, than by suppressing all these dissensions, extinguishing all Quarrels, and reducing the minds of men to an Agreement and Unity in Religious worship. For 'tis just as impossible to keep different Factions of Religion quiet and peaceable, as 'tis to make the common people wise men and Philosophers. If indeed we could suppose them sober and discreet, it were then no great danger to leave them to their Liberty; but upon the same supposition we may as well let them loose from all the Laws of Government and Policy: because if every private

man had wit and honesty enough to govern himself and his own Actions, there would be no need of Publick Laws and Governours. And yet upon this impossible Presumption stand all the Pretences for Liberty of Conscience, That, if men were permitted it, they would use it wisely and peaceably; *than which 'tis hard to suppose a greater Impossibility.* For the Conscience of the Multitude is the same thing, with their Wisdom and Discretion: and therefore, 'tis as natural for them to fall into the snare of an abused and vicious Conscience, as 'tis to be rash and foolish: For an erroneous Conscience is but one sort of Folly, that relates to the Judgment of their moral Actions; in which they are as ignorant, and as likely to mistake as in any other Affairs of Humane Life. There is no Observation in the world establish'd upon a more certain and universal Experience, than that the generality of mankind are not so obnoxious to any sort of Follies and Vices, as to wild and unreasonable conceits of Religion; and that, when their heads are possess'd with them, there are no principles so pregnant with mischief and disturbance as they. And if Princes would but consider, how liable mankind are to abuse themselves with serious and conscientious Villanies, they would quickly see it to be absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of their Kingdoms, that there be set up a more
severe

severe Government over mens Consciences and Religious perswasions, than over their Vices and Immoralities. For, of all Villains the well-meaning Zealot is the most dangerous: Such men have no checks of Conscience, nor fears of miscarriage to damp their industry, but their Godliness makes them bold and furious; and, however their Attempts succeed, they are sure of the Rewards of Saints and Martyrs. And what so glorious as to lose their lives in the Cause of God? These men are ever prepared for any mischief, if they have but a few active and crafty Knaves to manage and set them on: (and there is never want of such in any Common-wealth.) And there needs no other motive to engage their Zeal in any Seditious Attempt, than to instil into their minds the Necessity of a thorow Reformation; and then you may carry them wheresoever you please, and they will never boggle at any Mischief, Out-rage, or Rebellion to advance the Cause. And therefore, it concerns the Civil Magistrate to beware of this sort of People above all others, as a party, that is always ready form'd for any Publick Disturbance. One would think, the world were not now to be taught, that there is nothing so difficult to be managed as Godly Zeal, or to be appeased as Religious Dissentions: People ever did, and ever will pursue such Quarrels with their utmost rage and fury; and therefore let

us be content to govern the world as it ever has been, and ever must be govern'd; and not be so fond as to trouble our heads with contriving ways of settling a Nation, whilst 'tis unsettled by Religion. Agreement in this is the first, if not the only foundation of Peace: and therefore, let that be first establish'd upon firm and lasting Principles; (which it easily may by severe Laws faithfully executed, but otherwise never can.) But till it is done, 'tis just as wise and safe for a Prince to enrich his Subjects with Trade and Commerce, as 'tis to load weak and unfinish'd Foundations with great and weighty Superstructures. To conclude, all Arguments are to be consider'd in their proper place, and order: and 'tis but an unskilful, and inartificial way of discoursing, to argue from less weighty and considerable matters against the first and Fundamental reasons of things; and yet of this preposterous Method are those men guilty, who talk of the Interests of Trade in opposition to the Interests of Government: And therefore for a fuller Answer to this, and all other the like Pretenses, I shall now refer the Reader to my Book; where I think I have proved enough to satisfy any man of an ordinary understanding, That Indulgence and Toleration is the most absolute sort of Anarchy, and that Princes may with less hazard give Liberty to mens Vices and Debauche-

Debaucheries, than to their Consciences. As for my Method, 'tis plain and familiar, and suited to every man's Capacity: I have reduced the state of the Controversie to a few easie and obvious Propositions; under these I have cou'd all the particular matters concern'd in our present Debates, and by Analogy to their Reasonableness have cleared off all Difficulties and Objections; and have been careful all along to prove the Absolute Necessity of what I assert from the most important ends and designs of Government, compared with the Natural Passions and Inclinations of Mankind. And whoever offers to talk of these Affairs without special regard both to the Nature of Government, and to the Nature of Man, may amuse himself with the fine Dreams and Hypotheses of a warm brain; but shall be certain to miss the necessary Rules of Life, and the most useful measures of practicable Policy; that are suited only to the Humours and Passions of men, and designed only to prevent their Follies, and bridle their Enormities. And therefore the main Notion I have pursued has been to make out, how Dangerous a thing Liberty of Conscience is, considering the Tempers, and Tendencies of Humane Nature, to the most necessary ends and designs of Government: A vein of which Reasoning I have been careful to run through all Parts and Branches of my Discourse,

course, it being vastly the most considerable, if not the only thing to be attended to in this Enquiry. And as I have kept close to my main Question, so have I cautiously avoided all other collateral and unnecessary Disputes; and have not confined my self to any Hypothesis, nor determined any Controversie, in which it was not immediately concern'd; but have expressed my Reasonings in so general terms, as that they might be equally forcible upon the minds of all men, of howsoever different Perswasions in all other matters.

And now I have no other Favour, or Civility, to request of the Reader, than that he would suspend his Judgment, till he have seriously perused, and weighed all parts of the following Treatise: But, if he shall pass Sentence upon any part, before he has considered the whole, he will in all probability put himself to the pains of raising those Objections, I have already answered to his hand; and perhaps the next thing he condemns may be his own Rashness.

CHAP. I.

*A more General Account
of the Necessity of an
Ecclesiastical Power, or
Sovereignty over Con-
science in matters of Re-
ligion.*

The Contents,


THE Competition between the Power
of Princes, and the Consciences of
Subjects, represented. The mischiefs that
unavoidably follow upon the Exemption
of Conscience from the Jurisdiction of
the Supreme Power. The absolute ne-
cessity of its being subject in affairs of
Religion to the Governours of the Com-
mon-wealth. This proved at large, be-
cause Religion has the strongest influence
upon the Peace of Kingdoms, and the
B Interests

Interests of Government. Religion is so far from being exempted from the Restraints of Laws and Penalties, that nothing more requires them. 'Tis more easie to Govern mens Vices than their Consciences, because all men are bold and confident in their Perswasions. The remiss Government of Conscience has ever been the most fatal miscarriage in all Common-wealths. Impunity of Offenders against Ecclesiastical Laws, the worst sort of Toleration. The Mischiefs that ensue upon the permitting men the Liberty of their Consciences are endless. Fanaticisme a boundless folly. Affairs of Religion as they must be subject to the Supreme Civil Power, so to none other. The Civil and Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions issue from the same Necessity of Nature, and are founded upon the same Reason of things. A brief account of the Original of Civil Power. The Original of Ecclesiastical Power the same. In the first ages of the World, the Kingly Power and Priestly Function were alwayes vested in the same Persons, and why. When they were separated in the Jewish State, the Supremacy was annexed to the Civil Power.

And

And so continued until, and after our Saviours Birth. No need of his giving Princes any new Commission to exercise that Power, that was antecedently vested in them by so unquestionable a Right. And therefore the Scripture rather supposes than asserts it. The Argument against penal Laws in Religion from the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, answered and confuted. The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Princes not derived from any grant of our Saviours, but from the natural and antecedent Rights of all Sovereign Power. Christ and his Apostles could not use any coercive Jurisdiction, because they acted in the capacity of Subjects. Their threatening: of Eternity carry in them as much compulsion upon Conscience as secular punishments. The Power of the Church purely Spiritual. In the first Ages of the Christian Church God supplied its want of Civil Jurisdiction by immediate and miraculous Inflictions from heaven. Diseases of the Body the usual consequences of Excommunication. And this had the same effect as temporal Punishments. All this largely proved out of the writings of St. Paul. When the

Emperours became Christian, the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction was reannext to the Civil Power. And so continued till the Usurpation of the Bishops of Rome. How since the Reformation the Ecclesiastical Power of Princes has been invaded by some Pragmatical Divines. Their Confidence has scared Princes out of their natural Rights. Of the clause of Exception annexed to the Jejunium Cecilianum. How the Puritans used it to countenance all their unruly and seditious Practices. A conclusion drawn from all the Premisses for the Absolute Necessity of the Ecclesiastical Power of Princes.

¶ I.  Otwithstanding that Conscience is the best if not the only security of Government, yet has Government never been contrould or disturb'd so much by any thing as Conscience. This has ever rival'd Princes in their Supremacy, and pretends to as uncontrollable an Authority over all the Actions and affairs of humane life, as the most absolute and unlimited Power durst ever challenge. Are Governours

vernours Gods Vicegerents? so is this. Have they a Power of deciding all Controversies? so has this. Can they prescribe rules of Vertue and Goodness to their Subjects? so may this. Can they punish all their criminal actions? so can this. And are they subject and accountable to God alone? so is this, that owns no superiour but the Lord of Consciences. And of the two Conscience seems to be the greater Sovereign, and to govern the larger Empire. For whereas the Power of Princes is restrain'd to the outward actions of men, this extends its Dominion to their inward thoughts: Its throne is seated in their minds, and it exercises all that Authority over their secret and hidden sentiments, that Princes claim over their publique and visible practices. And upon this account is it set up' upon all occasions to grapple with the Scepters and Swords of Princes, and countermand any Laws, they think good to prescribe; and when ever subjects have a mind to controul or disobey their Decrees, this is immediately prest and engaged to their party, and does not only dictate, but vouches all their Re-

monstrances. Do Subjects rebell against their Sovereign? 'tis Conscience that takes up Arms. Do they murder Kings? 'tis under the Conduct of Conscience. Do they separate from the communion of the Church? 'tis Conscience that is the Schismatick. Do they tye themselves by one Oath to contradict and evacuate another? 'tis Conscience that imposes it. Every thing any man has a mind to, is his Conscience; and Murder, Treason, and Rebellion plead its Authority. The Annals and Histories of all times and places are too sad a witness, that this great and sacred thing has ever been abused, either through the folly of some, or hypocrysie of others, to patronise the most desperate Mischiefs and Villanies, that were ever acted.

§. 2. Here then we see is a Competition between the Prerogative of the Prince, and that of Conscience, *i. e.* every Private mans own judgment and perswasion of things; The judgment of the Magistrate inclines him to command, that of the Subject to disobey; and the Dictates of his Conscience countermand the

the Decrees of his Prince. Now is there not likely to be untoward doings, when two supreme Powers thus clash and contradict each other? For what power would be left to Princes, if every private mans perswasion (for that is his Conscience) may give check to their Commands? Most mens minds or Consciences are weak, silly, and ignorant things, acted by fond and absurd principles, and imposed upon by their vices and their passions; so that were they entirely left to their own conduct, in what mischiefs and confusions must they involve all Societies? Let Authority command what it please, they would doe what they list. And what is this but a state of perfect Anarchy, in which every man does what is good in his own eyes? And therefore whilst men contend for the sovereign Empire of their Consciences, and invest it with the Royal supremacy, by making it subject and accountable to none but God alone, they doe in effect but usurp their Prince's Crown, defie his Authority, and acknowledge no Governour but themselves. For seeing that Conscience is nothing but the judgment and opinion of their own Actions, if this be

exempt from the Commands of Governours, and if men not only may, but alwaies ought to comply with their own Dictates, when they oppose their Decrees, 'tis easie to determine whether themselves or their Governours be vested with the supreme Authority. In brief, every single Person is subject to two supreme Powers, the Laws of his Prince, and the Dictates of his Conscience, *i. e.* to his own and his Princes Opinion: and therefore if the supreme Power of the Prince must give place to that of his Conscience, it ceases upon that score to be supreme; because there is a superiour Authority that can countermand all its Laws and Constitutions. What then is to be done in this case? Who shall arbitrate between these two mighty rival Powers, and so justly assign the true bounds of their respective Dominions; that Princes may never intrench upon the rights of Conscience, nor Conscience lay waste the rights of Princes, but both may act within their proper Spheres without invading each others Territories? For whenever their Powers happen to interfere, the quarrel quickly proceeds to all the mischiefs and confusions of war.

For

For there is not any thing so tender, or so unruly as Conscience : if Authority curb it too severely, it grows wild and furious and impatient of all restraints ; if it permit it an unbridled liberty , it soon runs it self into all the mischiefs and enormities in the world. And therefore it must be managed with equal tenderness and severity : and as it must be guided by wise , and sober Laws , else it grows giddy and exorbitant ; so must it not be provoked to resistance by Tyranny and oppression : for if it once put the sword into subjects hands, it proves of all Rebells the most fatal and implacable, and is the best Commander of a Rebellious Army in the world. We see then that tis a matter of equal difficulty and importance to avoid all the mischiefs and calamities that naturally follow upon the Contentions of these two supreme Powers. 'Tis difficult to bring them to terms of Accommodation, because neither of them will own any superior that may umpire their controversy ; and yet that this should be done is absolutely necessary to the peace, settlement, and tranquillity of all Commonwealths.

§. 3. And therefore 'tis the design of this Discourse by a fair and impartial debate to compose all their differences, adjust all their quarrels and contentions, and settle things upon their true and proper foundations. Which I think may be effectually enough perform'd by these two Considerations.

1. By proving it to be absolutely necessary to the peace and government of the World, that the supreme Magistrate of every Common-wealth should be vested with a Power to govern and conduct the Consciences of Subjects in affairs of Religion.

2. By shewing this to be so certain and undoubted a Truth, that it is and must be acknowledged by its fiercest Adversaries; and that those who would deprive the supreme Civil Power of its Authority in reference to the Conduct of the worship of God, are forced to allow it in other more material parts of Religion; though they are both liable to the same inconveniences and objections. And this will oblige me to state the true extent of the Magistrates Power over Conscience in reference to Divine Worship,

ship, by shewing it to be the very same with his Power over Conscience in matters of Morality and all other affairs of Religion. Under one of which two Considerations I shall have occasion to state the most material Questions, and to answer the most considerable Objections, that occur in this Controversie. And I do not question but things may be made out with that demonstrative evidence, and settled upon such safe and moderate principles, as may abundantly satisfy every mans Conscience; how nice and curious soever, provided it be not debauch't with vice, and wicked principles; but if it be, then tis easie to make it appear both the Magistrates duty and Interest to punish such vicious and diseased Consciences as much as all other immorality.

§. 4. First then 'tis absolutely necessary to the Peace and Tranquillity of the Commonwealth, which, though it be the prime and most important end of Government, can never be sufficiently secured, unless Religion be subject to the Authority of the supreme Power, in that it has the strongest influence upon hu-
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mane affairs ; and therefore if the Sovereign Power cannot order and manage it, it would be but a very incompetent Instrument of publique happiness , would want the better half of it self , and be utterly weak and ineffectual for the ends of Government. For tis certain, nothing more governs the minds of men than the apprehensions of Religion. This leads or drives them any way, and as true Piety secures the publique weal by taming and civilizing the passions of men, and inuring them to a mild gentle and governable spirit: So superstition and wrong notions of God and his Worship are the most powerful engines to overturn its settlement. And therefore unless Princes have Power to bind their subjects to that Religion that they apprehend most advantageous to publique Peace and Tranquillity , and restrain those Religious mistakes that tend to its subversion; they are no better than Statues and Images of Authority , and want that part of their power that is most necessary to a right discharge of their Government. For what if the minds of men happen to be tainted with such furious and boisterous Conceptions of Religion , as incline

cline them to stubbornness and sedition, and make them unmanageable to the Laws of Government ; shall not a Prince be allowed to give check to such unruly and dangerous Perswasions ? If he may, then 'tis clear that he is endued with a Power to conduct Religion, and that must be subject to his Dominion as well as all other Affairs of state. But if he may not, then is he obliged in some cases tamely to permit his Subjects to ruine and overturn the Common-wealth. For if their wild and capricious humors are not severely bridled by the strictest Laws and Penalties, they soon grow headstrong and unruly, become alwaies troublesome, and often fatal to Princes. The minds of the Multitude are of a fierce and eager temper, apt to be driven without bounds and measures, whithersoever their Perswasions hurry them : and when they have overheated their unsetled heads with religious rage and fury, they grow wild talkative and ungovernable ; and in their mad and raving fits of zeal break all the restraints of Government, and forget all the laws of order and sobriety. Religion sanctifies all their passions : anger, malice, and bitterness are holy servors in
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the cause of God. This cancels and dispenses with all the obligations of sobriety: And what has Prudence to do with Religion? this is too hot and eager to be tyed up to its flat and dull formalities. Zeal for the Glory of God will both excuse and justify any Enormity. There can be no faction or rebellion in carrying on the Interests of the Godly Party, and the great work of a thorough Reformation must not be trusted to the care of carnal and lukewarm Politicians. And by these and the like pretenses do they easily destroy the reverence of all things Sacred and Civil, to propagate any wild Propositions; are arm'd with Religion, and led on by the spirit of God to disturb the Publick peace, kill Kings, and overthrow Kingdoms. And this has ever been the bane and reproach of Religion in all times and places: and there is scarce a Nation in the world that has not felt the miseries and confusions of an holy War: and the Annals of all Ages are full of sad Stories to this purpose.

§. 5. And therefore to exempt Religion and the Consciences of men from the Authority of the Supreme Power is
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but to expose the peace of Kingdoms to every wild and fanatique Pretender, who may when ever he pleases, under pretences of Reformation thwart and unsettle Government without controul; seeing no one can have any power to restrain the perswasions of his Conscience. And Religion will be so far from being at liberty from the Authority of the Civil power, that nothing in the world will be found to require more of its care and Influence; because there is not any other vice to which the vulgar sort of men are more prone than to Superstition or debauchd conceptions concerning God and his Worship, nor any that more inclines them to an unruly and seditious temper. It enflames their crazy heads with a Furious and Sectarian Zeal, and adopts their rankest and most untoward passions into the dutys of Religion. And when passion becomes holy, then it can never be exorbitant; but the more furious and ungovernable it is, so much the more vehement is their zeal for the glory of God; and they that are most peevish and refractory are upon that account the most Godly. And then all passion and stubbornness in Religious quarrels must

must be Christned Zeal, all Zeal must be sacred, and nothing that is sacred can be excessive. And now when men act furiously upon these mistakes (as all that are possessed with them must) what can the issue be but eternal Miseries and Confusions? Every opinion must make a sect, and every sect a faction, and every faction, when it is able, a war, and every war is the cause of God, and the cause of God can never be prosecuted with too much violence. And then all sobriety is lukewarmness, to be obedient to Government carnal Compliance, and not to proceed to Rebellion for carrying on the great work of a thorough Reformation is to want Zeal for the Glory of God. And thus are their Vices sanctified by their Consciences, malice folly and madness are ever the prevailing ingredients of their superstitious zeal, and Religion only obliges them to be more sturdy and impudent against the Laws of Government; and they are now encouraged to cherish those Passions in spite of Authority, from which the severity of Laws might effectually have restrain'd them, were it not for the cross obligations of an untoward Conscience.

p. 6. And

§. 6. And for this reason is it, that 'tis found so nice and difficult a thing to Govern men in their perswasions about Religion, beyond all the other affairs and transactions of humane life ; because erroneous Consciences are bold and confident enough to outface Authority : whereas Persons of debauch and scandalous lives , being condemn'd by their own Consciences as well as the publick Laws , can have nothing to bear them up against the will of their Superiours , and restraints of Government. But when mens minds are possess'd with such unhappy Principles of Religion as are more destructive of the peace and order of civil society than open lewdness and debauchery , and when the Vertues of the Godly are more pregnant with mischief and villany than the Vices of the wicked, and when their Consciences are satisfied in their mischievous and ungovernable perswasions, and when they seriously believe that they approve themselves to God by being refractory and irreclamable in their Fanatick Zeal, then how easie is it to defie Authority, and trample upon all
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its threatnings and penalties? And those Laws, that would awe a prophane and irreligious Person into at least an outward compliance, shall but exasperate a boisterous Conscience into a more vehement and seditious disobedience. Now when 'tis so difficult for Magistrates either to remove these Religious Vices, or to bridle their unruliness, they must needs find it an incomparably harder task to restrain the extravagancies of Zeal, than of Lewdness and Debauchery. And therefore seeing the multitude is so inclinable to these mistakes of Religion, and seeing when they are infected with them, they grow so turbulent and unruly, I leave it to Governours themselves to judge, whether it does not concern them with as much vigilance and severity either to prevent their rise or suppress their growth, as to punish any the foulest crimes of Immorality? And if they would but seriously consider into what exorbitances peevish and untoward principles about Religion naturally improve themselves, they could not but perceive it to be as much their Concernment to punish them with the severest inflictions, as any whatsoever principles of Rebellion in the State.

§. 7. And

§. 7. And this certainly has ever
 been one of the most fatal miscarriages
 of all Governours, in that they have
 not been aware of this fierce and impla-
 cable enemy ; but have gone about to go-
 vern unruly Consciences by more easie
 and remiss laws, than those that are only
 able to suppress scandalous and confessed
 villanies, and have thought them suffici-
 ently restrain'd by threatening punish-
 ments, without inflicting them. And
 indeed in most Kingdoms (so little have
 Princes understood their own Interests
 in reference to Religion) Ecclesiastical
 Laws have been set up only for Scar-
 crows, being establish'd rather for shew
 and Form sake, than with any design of
 giving them life, by putting them into
 Execution ; and if any were so hardy as
 not to be scared into obedience by the
 severity of their threatnings, they have
 been emboldned to disobedience by the
 remissness of their execution, till they have
 not only plaid with the Law it self as a
 senseless trifle, but have scorn'd the weak-
 ness of the Power that set it up. For there
 is nothing more certain in experience,
 than that Impunity gives not only war-

ranty but encouragement to Disobedience; and by habituating men to controul the edicts of Authority, teaches them by degrees to despise it. And this is the main reason why Ecclesiastical Laws have generally proved such ineffectual instruments of Uniformity, because they have either been weakned through want of execution, or in a manner cancell'd by the oppositions of Civil Constitutions. For when Laws are bound under severe penalties, and when the Persons, who are to take cognisance of the Crime, have not Power enough to punish it, or are perpetually check't and controul'd by a stronger Power, no wonder if the Laws be affronted and despised; and if instead of bringing mens minds to compliance and subjection, they exasperate them into open contumacy. Restraint provokes their stubbornness, and yet redresses not the mischief. And therefore it were better to grant an uncontroul'd liberty by declaring for it, than after having declared against it, to grant it by silence and impunity. The Prohibition disoblige Disenters, and that is one evill; the Impunity allows them Toleration, and that is a greater: and where

where Governours permit, what their Laws forbid, there the Common-wealth must at once feel all the evils both of restraint and liberty. So that as they would expect Peace and Settlement, they must be sure at first to bind on their Ecclesiastical Laws with the streightest knot, and afterward to keep them in force and countenance by the severity of their Execution; in that Wild and Fanatick Consciences are too headstrong to be curb'd with an ordinary severity; and therefore their restraints must be proportion'd to their unruliness: and they must be managed with so much a greater care and strictness than all other principles of publick disturbance, by how much they are more dangerous and unruly.

¶ 8. For if Conscience be ever able to break down the restraints of Government, and all men have licence to follow their own perswasions, the mischief is infinite, and the folly endless; and they seldom cease to wander from folly to folly, till they have run themselves into all the whimsies and enormities, that can debauch Religion, or annoy the publick Peace. The giddy Mul-

tirude are of a restless and stragling humour; and yet withall so ignorant and injudicious, that there is nothing so strange and uncouth, which they will not take up with Zeal and Confidence: In-
 somuch that there never yet was any Common-wealth, that gave a real liberty to mens Imaginations; that was not suddainly overrun with numberless divisions and subdivisions of Sects: as was notorious in the late Confusions, when Liberty of Conscience was laid as the Foundation of Settlement. How was Sect built upon Sect, and Church upon Church, till they were advanced to such a height of Folly, that the Usurpers themselves could find no other way to work their subversion, and put an end to their extravagancies, but by overturning their own Foundations, and checking their growth by Laws and Penalties. The humor of Fanaticising is a boundless folly, it knows no restraints, and if it be not kept down by the severity of Governours, it grows and encreases without end or limit, and never ceases to swell it self, till it has broke down all the banks and restraints of Government. Thus when the Disciplinarians had in
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pursuit of their own peevish and unreasonable principles divided from the Church of *England*, others upon a farther improvement of the same principles subdivided from them; every new opinion was enough to found a new Church, and Sect was spawn'd out of Sect, till there were as many Languages as Families: For when they were once parted from the order and sobriety of the Church they lived in, nothing could set bounds to their wild and violent Imaginations.

§ 9. Schismaticks always run themselves into the same excess in the Church as Rebels and Seditious Persons do in the State, who out of a hatred to Tyranny are restless till they have dissolved the Commonwealth into Anarchy and Confusion; and, because some Kingly Governments have proved Tyrannical, will allow no free States but under Republicques. As was notorious in all the Apologies for the late Usurpers, who took it for granted in general, That all Government under a single Person was slavish and oppressive without respect to its particular Constitutions; and that the very name of a Commonwealth was a sufficient

preservation of the Peoples Liberties,
 notwithstanding that those who managed it were never so imperious and Arbitrary in the exercise of their Power. And in the same manner our Church Dissenters, out of abhorrency to the Papal Tyranny and Usurpation upon mens understandings, never think the liberty of their Consciences sufficiently secured, till they have shaken off all Subjection to Humane Authority: and because the Church of *Rome* by her unreasonable Impositions has invaded the Fundamental Liberties of mankind, they presently conclude all restraints upon licentious Practices and Perswasions about Religion under the hated name of Popery. And some Theological Empericks have so possess'd the Peoples heads with this fond conceit, that they will see no middle way between Spiritual Tyranny, and Spiritual Anarchy, and so brand all restraint of Government in Affairs of Religion as if it were Antichristian, and never think themselves far enough from *Rome*, till they are wandered as far as *Munster*. Whereas the Church of *England* in her first Reformation was not so wild as to abolish all Ecclesiastical Authority, but only

only removed it from those who had unjustly usurp'd it to its proper seat, and restrain'd it within its due bounds and limits : And because the Church of *Rome* had clogg'd Christianity with two many garish and burdensome Ceremonies, they did not immediately strip her naked of all modest and decent Ornaments out of an over-hot opposition to their too flanting Pomp and Vanity, but only cloathed her in such a Dress, as became the Gravity and Sobriety of Religion. And this is the Wisedom and Moderation of our Church to preserve us sober between two such unreasonable Extremes.

§ 10. But not to run too hastily into particular Disputes, 'tis enough at present to have proved in general the absolute necessity that Affairs of Religion should be subject to Government; and then if they be exempt from the Jurisdiction of the Civil Power, I shall demand, Whether they are subject to any other Power, or to none at all? If the former, then the Supreme Power is not Supreme, but is subject to a Superiour in all matters of Religion, or rather (what is equally absurd) there would be two Supreme Powers

ers in every Commonwealth ; for if the Princes Jurisdiction be limited to Civil Affairs, and the concerns of Religion be subject to another Government, then may Subjects be obliged to (what is impossible) contradictory commands : and at the same time the Civil Magistrate requires him to defend his Countrey against an Invasion, the Ecclesiastical Governour may command him to abandon its defence, for the carrying on an Holy War in the Holy Land , in order to the Recovery of our Saviour's Sepulchre from the Possession of the Turks and Saracens. But seeing no man can be subject to contradictory obligations, 'tis by consequence utterly impossible he should be subject to two Supreme Powers.

If the latter, then the former Argument Returns , and as to one half of the concerns of the Commonwealth there must be a perfect Anarchy, and no Government at all. And there is no Provision to be made against all those publick mischiefs and disturbances that may arise from Errors and Enormities in Religion ; the Commonwealth must for ever be exposed to the follies of Enthusiasts and villanies of Impostors ; and any

any man that can but pretend Conscience, may whenever he pleases endeavour its Ruine : So that if Princes should forego their sovereignty over mens Consciences in matters of Religion, they leave themselves less Power than is absolutely necessary to the Peace and Defence of the Commonwealths they govern. In brief, the Supreme Government of every Commonwealth wherever it is lodged, must of necessity be universal, absolute, and uncontrollable, in all affairs whatsoever, that concern the Interests of mankind, and the ends of Government : For if it be limited, it may be controul'd : but 'tis a thick and palpable Contradiction to call such a Power Supreme, in that whatever controuls it must as to that case be its Superiour. And therefore Affairs of Religion being so strongly influential upon Affairs of State, and having so great a power either to advance or hinder the publick felicity of the Commonwealth, they must be as uncontrollably subject to the Supreme Power as all other Civil Concerns, because otherwise it will not have Authority enough to secure the publick Interests of the Society, or to attain the necessary

cessary and most important ends of its Institution.

¶ II. Now from these Premises we may observe, That all Supreme Power both in Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs, issues from the same Original, and is founded upon the same Reason of things; namely, the indispensable necessity of Society to the preservation of Humane Nature, and of Government to the preservation of Humane Society, a Supreme Power being absolutely necessary to the decision of all those Quarrels and Controversies, that are naturally consequent upon the Passions and Appetites of men, there being no other way of ending their Differences but by the Decrees of a final and unappealable Judicature. For if every man were to be his own Judge, mens Determinations would be as contradictory as their Judgments, and their Judgments as their humours or Interests; and so must their dissensions of necessity be endless: And therefore to avoid these and all other Inconveniences that would naturally follow upon a state of War, it was necessary there should be one Supreme and Publick Judgment, to whose Deter-

Determinations the private Judgment of every single Person should be obliged to submit it self. And hence the Wisdom of Providence, knowing to what passions and irregularities mankind is obnoxious, never suffered them to live without the restraints of Government ; but in the beginning of things so ordered Affairs, that no man could be born into the World without being subject to some Superior : every Father being by Nature Vested with a Right to govern his Children. And the first Governments in the world were establish'd purely upon the natural Rights of Paternal Authority, which afterward grew up to a Kingly Power by the encrease of Posterity ; and he that was at first but Father of a Family , in process of time , as that multiply'd, became Father of a City or Province ; and hence it came to pass that in the first ages of the World, Monarchy was its only Government , necessarily arising out of the Constitution of Humane Nature, it being so natural for Families to enlarge themselves into Cities by uniting into a body according to their several Kindreds , whence by Consequence the head of those Families must become

become Prince and Governour of a larger and more diffused Society. And therefore *Cedrenus* makes *Adam* the first Monarch in the World, *ἡνὶ ἡγεμόνων τῷ γένει ὅς' ἀνθρώπων δι' ἑαυτοῦ τῆς ζωῆς*. And thus afterwards in the division of the Earth among the Posterity of *Noah*, the heads of Families became Kings and Monarchs of the Nations of which they were Founders, from whence were propagated the several Kingdoms of the first and elder times ; as appears not only from the *Mosaick* History , but also from all other the best and most antient Records of the first Ages of the World : But as for Commonwealths , they are comparatively of a very late discovery, being first contriv'd among the *Grecians* , whose Democracies and Optimacies were made out of the Ruines of Monarchick Government ; which was but sutable to the proud, factious, and capricious humour of that Nation, where scarce any one could pretend to a little skill in Poetry or Wrastring (their two greatest accomplishments) but he must immediately be an Undertaker for new modelling the Commonwealth : which doubtless was one of the main causes of their perpetual

petual Confusions, and frequent Changes
in Government.

§ 12. Having thus firmly founded all Civil Government upon Paternal Authority, I may now proceed to shew, That all Ecclesiastical Power bottoms upon the same Foundation: For as in the first Ages of the world, the Fathers of Families were vested with a Kingly Power over their own Posterity; so also were they with the Priestly Office executing all the Holy Functions of Priesthood in their own Persons, as appears from the unanimous testimony of Histories both Sacred and Prophane. Thus we find all the Antient Patriarchs Priests to their own Families; which Office descended together with the Royal Dignity to the first-born of each Family. And this custom of investing the Sovereign Power with the Supreme Priesthood, was (as divers Authors both Antient and Modern observe) universally practised over all Kingdoms of the world for well nigh 2500 years, without any one president to the contrary.

In that among all Societies of men there is as great a necessity of publick Worship, as of publick Justice; the
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Power whereof, because it must be seated some where, can properly belong to him alone, in whom the Supreme Power resides; in that he alone having Authority to assign to every Subject his proper Function, and among others this of the Priesthood; the exercise whereof as he has Power to transfer to another, so may he, if he please, reserve it to himself. And therefore this the Wisdom of the elder Ages always practised, in order to the better security of their Government; as well knowing the tendency of Superstition, and false notions of the Divine Worship to Tumults and Seditions; and therefore to prevent the disturbances that might spring from Factions in Religion, they were solicitous to keep its management in their own immediate disposal. And though in the Jewish Commonwealth, the Priestly Office was upon Reasons peculiar to that State separated by a Divine positive Command from the Kingly Power; yet the Power and Jurisdiction of the Priest remained still subject to the Sovereign Prince, their Kings always exercising a Supremacy over all persons, and in all Causes Ecclesiastical: Nothing can be more unquestionable than the Precedents

cedents of *David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehu, Jehosaphat, Josiah, &c.* who exercised as full a Legislative Power in Affairs of Religion, as in Affairs of State. They alone restrain'd and punish'd whatever tended to the subversion of the Publick and establish'd Religion; they suppress'd Innovations, reform'd Corruptions, ordered the Decencies and Solemnities of publick Worship, instituted new Laws and Ceremonies, and conducted all the concerns of Religion by their own Power and Authority. Now there is nothing that can be pretended against the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Christian Magistrates, that might not with as great a shew of Reason have been urged against these Jewish Kings.

§ 13. And thus were the Affairs of Religion in all Nations govern'd by the Supreme Power till our Blessed Saviours Birth, who came into the world to establish new Laws of Morality, and not to set up any new Models of Policy. He came not to unsettle the Foundations of Government, or to diminish the natural Rights of Princes, & settle the conduct of humane affairs upon new Principles, but

left the Government of the world in the same condition he found it : All his Discourses were directed to private persons , and such whose duty it was to Obey, and not Command ; and therefore though we find him every where highly solicitous to press men to Obedience in general, (and perhaps it would be no easie task to find out any Professors of the Art of Policy , either antient or modern, that have carried the Doctrine of Obedience so high as the Sermons of our Saviour , and the Writings of his Apostles) yet no where he takes upon him to settle, much less to limit the Prerogatives of Princes ; and therefore the Government of Religion being vested in them by an antecedent and natural Right, must without all Controversie belong to them, till it is derogated from them by some Superiour Authority : so that unless our Saviour had expressly disrobed the Royal Power of its Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction , nothing else can alienate it from their Prerogative. And therefore 'tis no wonder if he left no Commands to the Civil Magistrate for the right Government of Religion ; for to what purpose should he give them a new Commission

mission to exercise that Power, that was already so firmly establish'd in the world by the unalterable dictates of Natural Reason, and Universal Practice, and Consent of Nations : it being so clearly inseparable from the Supreme Power in every Common-wealth, that it loses both its Supremacy, and its usefulness, unless it be universal and unlimited ? In that the end of all Government is to secure the Peace and Tranquillity of the Publick ; and therefore it must have power to manage and order every thing that is serviceable to that end. So that it being so clearly evident from the experience of mankind, and from the nature of the thing itself, that nothing has a stronger influence upon the publick Interests of a Nation, than the well or ill management of Religion ; its conduct must needs be as certain and inseparable a Right of the Supreme Power in every Common-wealth, as the Legislative Authority it self, without which 'tis utterly impossible there should be any Government at all. And therefore the Scripture seems rather to suppose than assert the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Princes. What else means that Promise, That Kings shall be

nursing Fathers to the Church of God, unless by their Power they may cherish and defend the true Religion, and protect it from being destroyed by Hereticks and Seducers ? What does the Scripture mean when it styles our Saviour *King of Kings*, and makes Princes his Vicegerents here on earth ? What means the Apostle when he says, Kings are appointed to this end, *That under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, not only in all honesty, but in all godliness too* ? Where we see, that the propagation of Godliness is as much the Duty of Governours, as the preservation of Justice ; neither of which can a Prince (as such) effectually promote, but by the proper effects of his Power, *viz.* Laws, and Penalties.

Besides all which, all the Power of the Common-wealth our Saviour lived in, was fall'n into such mens hands, that would be so far from concerning themselves in the defense, protection, and propagation of Christianity, that he knew they would exert the utmost of their force to suppress and destroy it. Now to what purpose should he entrust them with a Commission to govern his Church, when he knew they would labour

bour its utter ruine and destruction? And hence was there no other peaceable method to propagate the Christian Faith in the world, but by the Patience and Sufferings of its Professors: And therefore our Saviour to secure his Religion from the reproach of being Factionous and Seditious against the State, was solicitous above all things to arm them with Meekness and Patience; and to this purpose he gave them glorious Promises to encourage their Submission to their unhappy Fate, and severe Injunctions to secure their Obedience to all the Commands of lawful Superiours, except when they run directly cross to the Interest of the Gospel; which as the posture of affairs then stood, was incomparably the most effectual as well as most innocent way of its Propagation.

¶ 14. And therefore 'tis but an idle and impertinent Plea that some men make for Liberty of Conscience, when they would restrain the Magistrates Power so, as to make use of no other means than what our Saviour and his Apostles used to convince and convert men: An Argument that much resembles that,

which they urge with so much popular noise and confidence against that little Grandeur and Authority that is left to the Governours of our Church ; because forsooth the Apostles, by reason of the unhappy juncture of affairs in their times, lived in a mean and persecuted condition ; and therefore what was their Calamity, these men would make our Duty : but it were to be wished they would pursue their Argument to all the purposes for which it may as rationally serve : and so they must sell their Lands, and bring the money and lay it at the Bishops feet ; they must pass away all their Proprieties, and have *all things in common, and part them to all men as every man has need*, because the Primitive Christians did so. At so prodigious a rate of impertinency do men talk, when their Passions dictate their Discourses ; and to so fine a pass would the Affairs of Christendom be brought by this trifling pretense of reducing the state of the Church to its Primitive Practice in all accidents and Circumstances of things.

But yet I suppose these men themselves would scarce imitate the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles in this particular ;

lar ; for if the Scribes and Pharisees were now in being , I hope they would not allow them the liberty openly to blaspheme the name of Jesus , and to persecute all that would not believe him an Impostor ; which though they did familiarly in his own time, yet he never went about to restrain their Blasphemies by Laws and Punishments : and therefore I only demand, Whether the Civil Magistrate may make penal Laws against Swearing and Blasphemy, and such other Irreligious Debaucheries ? If he may, why then they are matters that as directly and immediately relate to Religion, as any Rites and Ceremonies of Worship whatsoever ; and for the Government of which they are as utterly to seek for any Precedent of our Saviour & his Apostles. Nay more, if this Argument were of any force, it would equally deprive the Magistrate of any Power to compel his Subjects to obedience to any of the moral Precepts of the Gospel by secular Laws and Punishments ; because our Saviour and his Apostles never did it : especially when all matters of Morality do as really belong to our spiritual concerns , as any thing that relates immediately to

Divine Worship, and Affairs of meer Religion: and therefore if the Civil Magistrate may not compel his Subjects to a right way of Worship with the Civil Sword, because this is of a Spiritual Concernment (as is pretended:) upon the same ground, neither may he make use of the same force to compel men to Duties of Morality, because they also equally relate to their Spiritual Interests: Beside the Magistrates Authority in both is founded upon the same Principle, *viz.* The absolute necessity of their due management in order to the Peace and preservation of the Common-wealth. We derive not therefore his Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from any grant of our Saviours, but from an antecedent right where-with all Sovereign Power was indued before ever he was born into the world; forasmuch as the same Providence that intrusted Princes with the Government of Humane Affairs, must of necessity have vested them in at least as much Power, as was absolutely necessary to the nature and ends of Government.

§ 15. But further yet, all the ways our Saviour has appointed in the Gospel
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for the advancement and propagation of Religion, were prescribed to Subjects, and not to Governours ; and this indeed is certain, that no private person can have any power to compel men to any part of the Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline of the Gospel ; for if he had, he would upon that very account cease to be a Private person , and be vested with a Civil Power. But that no Magistrate may do this, will remain to be proved, till they can produce some express Prohibition of our Saviour to restrain him : and till that be done, 'tis but a strange rate of arguing, when they would prove that Magistrates may not use any coercive Power to promote the Interests of Religion, because this is forbidden to their Subjects ; especially when 'tis to be considered, that Christ and his Apostles acted themselves in the capacity of Subjects to the Common-wealth they lived in, and so could neither use themselves , nor impart to others any coercive Power for the advancement , and propagation of their Doctrine ; but were confined to such prudent and peaceable Methods , as were lawful for persons in their condition to make use of, *i. e.* humble Intreaties, and

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Perswasions. Our Saviour never took any part of the Civil Power upon himself, and upon that score could not make penal and coercive Laws; the power of Coercion being so certainly inseparable from the Supreme Civil Power: But though he back'd not his Commandments with temporal punishments, because his Kingdom was not of this world; yet he enforced them with the threatnings of Eternity, which carry with them more compulsion upon mens Consciences than any Civil Sanctions can: For the only reason why Punishments are annex'd to Laws, is because they are strong Motives to Obedience; and therefore when our Saviour tyed his Laws upon mankind under Eternal Penalties, he used as much force to drive us to Obedience, as if he had abetted them with temporal Inflictions: So that the only reason why he bound not the Precepts of the Gospel upon our Consciences by any secular Compulsories, was not because Compulsion was an improper way to put his Laws in execution, for then he had never establish'd them with more enforcing sanctions; but only because himself was not invested with any secular Power,

and

and so could not use those methods of Government, that are proper to its Jurisdiction.

¶ 16. And therefore the Power, wherewith Christ intrusted the Governours of his Church in the Apostolical Age, was purely Spiritual; they had no Authority to inflict temporal Punishments, or to force men to submit to their Canons by Laws and Penalties; they only declared the Laws of God, and denounced the threatnings annexed to them, having no coercive Power to inflict the Judgments they declared, and leaving the event of their Censures to the Divine Jurisdiction. Though alas! all this was too weak to attain the ends of Discipline (*viz.* to reclaim the offending Person, and by example of his Censure to awe others into Obedience) and could have but little influence upon the most stubborn and notorious Offenders. For to what purpose should they drive one from the Communion of the Church that has already renounced it? To what purpose should they deny him the Instruments and Ministries of Religion, that cares not for them? To what purpose should

Should they turn him out of their Society, that has already prevented them by forsaking it? How should offenders be reclaim'd, by being condemn'd to what they choose? How should they be scared by threatnings, that they neither fear nor believe? And if they will turn Apostates, how can they be awed back into their Faith by being told they are so? And therefore because of the weakness of this Spiritual Government to attain the ends of Discipline, and because that the Governours of the Church being Subject to those of the Common-wealth, they were not capable of any coercive Power; 'tis wonderfully remarkable how God himself was pleased to supply their want of Civil Jurisdiction by his own immediate Providence, and in a Miraculous manner to inflict the Judgments they denounced; that if their Censures could not affright refractory Offenders into Obedience, his Dreadful execution of them might. For 'tis notoriously evident from the best Records of the Primitive and Apostolical Ages, that the Divine Providence was pleased to abet the Censures of the Church by immediate and Miraculous inflictions from Heaven. In
those

those times torments and diseases of the Body were the usual consequents of Excommunication; and this was as effectual to aw men into subjection to the Ecclesiastical Government, as if it had been endued with coercive Jurisdiction. For this consists only in a power of inflicting temporal punishments; and therefore when the Anathema's of the Church were attended with such Inflictions, Criminals must have as much reason to dread the Rod of the Apostles, as the Sword of the Civil Magistrate, in that it carried with it a power of inflicting temporal Penalties, either of Death, as on *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, or of Diseases as on *Elymas* the Sorcerer. And this is that *passage* where-with *St. Paul* so often threatens to lash the factious *Corinthians* into a more quiet and peaceable temper. Thus *1 Cor. 4.21.* *What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?* i. e. Consider with your selves, that seeing I have determined to visit the Church of *Corinth*, whether when I come you had rather I should chastise you with the Apostolical Rod by exercising my Power of inflicting punishments, and by consigning the refractory to those sharp
and

and grievous Diseases that are wont immediately to follow Apostolical Censures; or whether I should come with a more gentle and merciful design without being forced by your stubbornness upon a necessity of using this severity among you? As you behave your selves, so may you expect to find me at my coming. And thus again, 2 Cor. 10. 6. He threatens them with his being *in a readiness* (if he should come among them) *to revenge all their disobedience*: And upon this accompt he immediately professes himself not asham'd to boast of his Power and Authority in the Church. And in the 13. Chapter of the same Epistle, he again shakes the same Rod over them, threatening, that if their Refractoriness force him to strike them with some Judgment, that it should be a sharp and severe one: *If I come again I will not spare; since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.* These extraordinary Inflictions were signs and evidences of his Apostleship. And he would make them know, that he was Commissioned by Christ to teach and govern their Church, by making them to feel the sad effects of his Miraculous Power, if nothing else would satisfie

tisfie them about the right of his Authority. And to the same purpose is the same Apostles command to the same Church concerning the incestuous *Corinthian*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. that they should deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, i. e. that they should denounce the sentence of Excommunication against him, which would amount to no smaller a Punishment, than his being resign'd up to the power and possession of some evil spirit, *Ἰνα μετατίθῃ αὐτὸν ἑαλεν πάλιν ἢ τοῦ πνεύματος*, *Chrysoft.* in 1. *ad Cor. Hom.* 15. to be tormented with Ulcers, or some other bodily Diseases and Infiictions, which was then the usual consequent of Excommunication. The end of all which is, as immediately follows, *The destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*, i. e. that being humbled and brought to a due sense of his Sin by the sadness of his Condition, and the heavy strokes of this cruel Executioner of the Divine Justice, this might be a means of working him to Repentance and Reformation. And to the same end did the same Apostle deliver *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* unto Satan, *that they might learn not to blaspheme*; that being vexed

vexed and tormented by some evil spirit; this might take down their proud and haughty stomachs, and make them cease to traduce and disparage his Apostolical Authority, when they had smarted so severely for contradicting it. And thus was the Divine Providence pleased in the first ages of the Church, when it wanted the assistance of the Civil Magistrate, to supply that defect by his own Almighty Power: so necessary is a coercive Jurisdiction to the due Government and Discipline of the Church, that God himself was fain to bestow it on the Apostles in a miraculous manner. And thus was the Primitive Discipline maintain'd by Miracles of Severity, as long as it wanted the Sword of the Civil Power. But when Christianity had once prevail'd and triumphed over all the oppositions of Pagan Superstition, and had gain'd the Empire of the world into its own possession, and was become the Imperial Religion, then began its Government to re-settle where nature had placed it, and the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction was annexed to the Civil Power: For as soon as the Emperours thought themselves concern'd to look to its Government, and Protection,

and

and were willing to abet the Spiritual Power of the Clergy with their Secular Authority ; then began the Divine Providence to withdraw the miraculous Power of the Church (in the same manner as he did by degrees all the other extraordinary Gifts of the Apostolical Age, as their necessity ceased) as being now as well supplied by the natural and ordinary Power of the Prince. So that though the Exercise of the Ministerial Function still continued in the Persons, that were thereunto Originally Commissioned by our Saviour, the Exercise of its Authority and Jurisdiction was restored to the Imperial Diadem ; and the Bishops became then (as they are now) Ministers of State as well as Religion, and challenged not any Secular Power, but what they derived from the Prince : who, supposing them best able to understand and manage the Interests of Religion, granted them Commissions for the Government of the Church under himself, and vested them with as much Coercive Power, as was necessary for the Execution of their Office and Jurisdiction ; In the same manner as Judges are deputed by the Supreme Authority of every Com-

mon-wealth to govern the Affairs of Justice, and to inflict the Penalties of the Law upon Delinquents : So that Bishops neither have, nor ever had any Temporal Authority, but only as they are the Kings Ecclesiastical Judges, appointed by him to govern Affairs of Religion, as Civil or Secular Judges are to govern affairs of Justice.

¶ 17. And now that the Government of all the Affairs of the Church devolved upon the Royal Authority as soon as it became Christian ; is undeniably evident from all the Laws and Records

Socr. l. 5.
PREF.

of the Empire : *ἀπὸ τῆς χριστιανισμοῦ ἡγεμενῶν βασιλευσίν, τὰ τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραγ-*

ματα ἡγεμεν ἐξ αὐτῶν : From the time that the Emperours became Christian, the disposal and government of Church Affairs depended entirely on their Authority : *Constantine* was no sooner settled in his Imperial Throne, but he took the settlement of all Ecclesiastical matters into his own Cognizance ; He call'd Synods and Councils in order to the Peace and Government of the Church, he ratified their Canons into Laws, he prohibited the Conventicles of the *Donatists*,

natists, and demolisht their Meetings houses, he made Edicts concerning Festivals, the Rites of Sepulture, the Immunities of Churches, the Authority of Bishops, the Priviledges of the Clergy, and divers other things appertaining to the outward Polity of the Church. In the exercise of which Jurisdiction he was carefully followed by all his Successours; which cannot but be known to every man that is not as utterly ignorant of the Civil Law, as he in the Comedy who supposed *Corpus Juris Civilis* to be a *Dutchman*. The Code, the Authenticks, the *French Capitulars* are full of Ecclesiastical Laws and Constitutions. The first Book of the *Code* treats of nothing but Religion, and the Rites and Ceremonies of Publick Worship; the Priviledges of Ecclesiastical Men and Things; the distinct Offices and Functions of the several degrees in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, and the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops both in Civil and Religious Affairs; and infinite other things that immediately concern the Interests of Religion. And then as for the Authenticks, Ecclesiastical Laws are every where scattered up and down through

the whole Volume; which, being divided into nine Collations, has not above one (*viz.* the fourth) that has not divers Laws relating to Church Affairs. And as for the Capitulars of *Charles the Great*, together with the Additions of *Lewis the Godly*, his Son and Successour, they contain little else but Ecclesiastical Constitutions; as may be seen in *Lindembrogius* his Collection of Ancient Laws, together with divers other Laws of *Theodorick*, and other *Gothish* Kings.

¶ 18. And next to the Divine Providence, we owe the Settlement and Preservation of Christian Religion in the World to the Conduct of Christian Princes. For by the time of *Constantine* the Primitive Spirit and Genius of Christianity was wearing out of fashion, and the Meekness and Humility of its first Professours began to give place to a furious and tumultuary Zeal; and no sooner did the heats of Persecution begin to abate, but the Church was presently shattered into swarms of Factions by the violent Passions and Animosities of its Members about bare Speculations or useless Practices: And of all the quarrels that
that

that ever disturbed the World ; there were never any perhaps so excuseless or so irregular as those of Christendom ; of which 'tis hard to determine, whether they were commenced with more folly and indiscretion, or pursued with more passion and frowardness. The rage and fierceness of Christians had kindled such a Fire in the Church, that it must unavoidably have been consumed by its own Combustions, had not the Christian Emperours employed all their Power to suppress the Fury of the Flames. And though in spite of all their Prudence and Industry, Christianity was sadly impaired by its own Tumults and Seditions ; yet had it not been for the care of Christian Princes, it had in all humane probability been utterly destroyed ; and the Flames that had once caught its Superstructures must without remedy have burnt up its very Foundations. And if we look into the Records and Histories of the first Christian Emperours, we shall find that the most dangerous disturbances that threatned the State, had their beginnings in the Church ; and that the Empire was more shaken by the intestine Commotions that arose

from Religion than by Foreign Warrs and Invasions. And upon this account is it, that we find them so highly concern'd to reconcile all the discords and allay all the heats about Religion, by silencing needless and unprofitable Controversies, determining certain and necessary Truths, prescribing decent Rites and Ceremonies of Publick Worship, and all other wise and prudent expedients to bring the minds and practices of men to Sobriety and Moderation.

§ 19. And by this means was the outward Polity of the Church tolerably well establish'd, and the Affairs of Religion competently well governed (though better or worse, according to the wisdom and vigilance of the several Emperours) till the Bishops of *Rome* usurp'd one half of the Imperial Power, and annexed the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Supremacy to their own See. For taking advantage of the Distractions occasion'd partly by the IncurSIONS of the Northern Nations on the West, partly by the Invasions of the *Turkish* Power on the East, but mainly by the Division of the Empire it self, they gain'd

gain'd either by force or fraud the whole Dominion of Religion to themselves, and by pretending to the Spirit of Infallibility, usurp't an absolute and uncontrollable Empire over the Faiths and Consciences of mankind. And whilst they at first pretended no other Title to their Sovereignty but what they derived from Religion, they were constrain'd to scrue up their Power to an unmeasurable Tyranny, thereby to secure themselves in those Insolencies and Indignities wherewith they perpetually affronted the Princes of Christendom. And knowing the Freeborn Reason of men would never tamely brook to be enslaved to so ignoble a Tyranny, they proclaim'd it a Traytour or (what is the same) a Heretick to the Catholick Faith, and by their lowd noises and menaces frighted it out of Christendom. In which design they at length advanced so farr, till *Rome* Christian became little less fond and superstitious than *Rome* Heathen, and Christianity it self was almost debauch't to the lowest guise of Paganism, and *Europe* the Seat of the most refined and politest part of mankind was involved in a more than *African*

Ignorance and Barbarity. And thus did they easily usher in the grand departure and Apostasie from Religion by the falling away from Reason, and founded the *Roman* Faith as well as Empire upon the Ruines of Humane Liberty.

¶ 20. In which sad posture continued the Affairs of Christendom till the Reformation: which though it has wrought wonderful Alterations in the Christian World, yet has it not been able to resettle Princes in their full and natural Rights, in reference to the Concerns of Religion. For although the Supremacy of the Civil Power in Religious Matters be expressly asserted in all the Publick Confessions of the reformed Churches, but especially in that of the Church of *England*; which is not content barely to affirm it, but denounces the sentence of Excommunication against all that deny it: Yet by reason of the exorbitant Power that some pert and pragmatical Divines have gain'd over the minds of the People, this great Article has found little or no entertainment in their Practices: there starting up a race of proud and imperious men about the beginning of the
the

the Reformation, who, not regarding the Princes Power, took upon themselves to frame precise Hypotheses of Orthodoxy, and to set up their own Pedantick Systems and Institutions for the Standards of Divine Truth; and wanting, what the other had, the Authority of Prescription, they pretended to the Spirit of God: and this Pretense not only excused, but justified any wild Theorems they could not prove by sober Reason; and those that would be awed with it, they embraced for Orthodox, and those that would not they branded for Hereticks: by which little device they decoyed the silly and ignorant rabble into their own party. The effect of all which has been nothing but a Brutish and Fanatick Ignorance, making men to talk of little else but Raptures and Ecstasies, and filling the World with a buzze and noise of the Divine Spirit; whereby they are only impreguably possess'd with their own wild and extravagant Fancies, become sawcy and impudent for Religion, confound Order, and despise Government, and will be guided by nothing but the whimsys and humours of an unaccountable Conscience.

§ 21. And hence it comes to pass
 that most Protestant Princes have been
 frightened (not to say Hector'd) out of the
 Exercise of their Ecclesiastical Jurisdic-
 tion by the Clamours of giddy and
 distemper'd Zealots ; Superstition and
 Enthusiasm have out-faced the Laws,
 and put Government out of Countenance
 by the boldness of their Pretensions.
 Confident men have talked so lowdly
 of the inviolable Sacredness and Au-
 thority of their Consciences , that Go-
 vernours, not throughly instructed in the
 nature and extent of their Power so
 lately restored to them, have been al-
 most scared from intermeddling with any
 thing, that could upon this score plead
 its Priviledges and Exemption from their
 Commands. And how peremptory so-
 ever some of them have been in assert-
 ing the Rights of their Supreme Power
 in Civil Affairs, they have been forced
 to seem modest and diffident in the
 exercise of their Ecclesiastical Supre-
 macy, and dare scarce own their Legi-
 slative Power in Religious Affairs, only
 to comply with the sawcy Pretenses
 of ungovernable and Tumultuary Zeal.

One

One notorious Instance whereof in our own Nation, is the *Jejunium Cecilianum*, the Wednesday Fast, that was injoynd with this Clause of Exception, *That if any Person should affirm it to be imposed with an Intention to bind the Conscience, he should be punished like the spreaders of false News.* Which is plainly to them that understand it, (as a late learned Prelate of our own observes) a direct Artifice to evacuate the whole Law : for (as he excellently argues) all Humane Power being derived from God, and bound upon our Consciences by his Power, not by Man, he that says it shall not bind the Conscience, says it shall be no Law, it shall have no Authority from God, and then it has none at all ; and if it be not tyed upon the Conscience, then to break it is no sin, and then to keep it is no duty. So that a Law without such an Intention is a Contradiction ; it is a law which binds only if we please, and we may obey when we have a mind to it ; and to so much we are tyed before the Constitution. But then if by such a Declaration it was meant, That to keep such

Fasting-

'Fasting-days was no part of a direct
 'Commandment from God, that is, God
 'had not required them by himself
 'immediately, and so it was (abstra-
 'cting from that Law) no Duty Evan-
 'gelical, it had been below the wisdom
 'of the Contrivers of it; for no man
 'pretends it, no man says it, no
 'man thinks it: and they might as well
 'have declar'd, That that Law was none
 'of the Ten Commandments. The
 matter indeed of this Law was not of
 any great moment, but the Declaration
 annexed to it proved of a Fatal and
 mischievous Consequence; for when
 once the unruly Consciences of the
 Puritans were got loose from the
 restraints of Authority, nothing could
 give check to their giddy and furious
 Zeal, but they soon broke out into the
 most impudent Affronts and Indignities
 against the Laws, and run themselves
 into all manner of Disloyal outrages
 against the State. As is notoriously
 evident in the writings and practices of
Cartwright, Goodman, Whittinham, Gilby,
Whitehead, Travers, and other leading
 Rabbies of the Faction; whose Treatises
 are stufed with railing, spiteful and
 malicious

malicious Speeches both against their Prince, the Clergy, the Lords of the Council, the Judges, the Magistrates, and the Laws, as were ever publicly vented by the worst of Traytours in any Society in the World. And as for the method of their Polity, it was plainly no more than this, first to reproach the Church with infamous and Abusive Dialogues, and then to Libel the State with bitter and Scurrilous Pamphlets, to possess mens minds with dislikes and jealousies about Publick Affairs, whisper about reproachful and slanderous Reports, inveigle the People with a thousand little and malicious Stories, enter into secret Leagues and Confederacies, foment Discontents and Seditions, and in every streight and exigence of State threaten & beleaguer Authority: In fine, the scope of all their Sermons and Discourses was to perswade their party, that if Princes refuse to Reform Religion, 'tis lawful for the People with Direction of their Godly Ministers (*i. e.* themselves) to do it, and that by violent and forcible courses. And whether this Principle in process of time led them, the Story is too long, too sad, and too well known

to be here repeated : 'tis sufficient, that it improved it self into the greatest Villanies, & concluded in the blackest Tragedy that was ever acted upon this Island.

¶ 22. Well then, to summe up the result of this Discourse, 'tis evident, we see, both from Reason and Experience, what a Powerful Influence Religion has upon the Peace and quiet of Kingdoms ; that nothing so effectually secures the Publick Peace , or so easily works its disturbance and ruin, as its well or ill Administration ; and therefore that there is an absolute necessity that there be some Supreme Power in every Commonwealth to take care of its due Conduct and Settlement ; that this must be the Civil Magistrate, whose Office it is to secure the Publick Peace, which because he cannot sufficiently provide for, unless he have the Power and Conduct of Religion ; its Government must of Necessity be seated in him and none else. So that those Persons, who would exempt Conscience and all Religious Matters from the Princes Power, must make him either a Tyrant or an Impotent Prince ; for if he take upon him to tye Laws of Religion
upon

upon their Consciences, then according to their Principles, he usurps an unlawful Dominion, violates the Fundamental Rights and Priviledges of Mankind, and invades the Throne and Authority of God himself: But if he confess that he cannot, then does he clearly pass away the biggest Security of his Government, and lay himself open to all the Plots and Villanies that can put on the Mask of Religion. And therefore should any Prince through unhappy miscarriages in the State be brought into such streights and exigences of Affairs, as that he cannot restrain the headstrong Inclinations of his Subjects, without the hazard of raising such Commotions and Disturbances, as perhaps he can never be able to allay, and so should be forced in spite of himself to indulge them their Liberty in their Fancies and Perswasions about Religion; yet unless he will de-vest himself of a more material and more necessary part of his Authority, than if he should grant away his Power of the Militia, or his Prerogative of ratifying all Civil Laws; unless, I say, he will thus hazard his Crown, and make himself too weak for Government by re-nouncing

nouncing the best part of his Supremacy; he must lay an Obligation upon all Persons, to whom he grants this their Religious freedom to profess, that 'tis matter of meer favour and indulgence; and that he has as much Power to govern all the Publick Affairs of Religion, as any other matters that are either conducive or prejudicial to the Publick Peace and Quiet of the Common-wealth. And if they be brought to this Declaration, they will but confess themselves (to say no worse) Turbulent and Seditious Persons, by acknowledging, That they refuse their Obedience to those Laws, which the Supreme Authority has just Power to impose.

CHAP. II.

A more Particular Account of the Nature and Necessity of a Sovereign Power in Affairs of Religion.

The Contents.

THe Parallel between Matters relating to Religious worship, and the Duties of Morality. Moral Vertues the most material Parts of Religion. This proved, (1.) From the Nature of Morality, and the Design of Religion: (2.) By a particular Induction of all the Duties of Mankind. A Scheme of Religion, reducing all its Branches either to the Vertues or Instruments of Morality. Of the Villany of those Mens Religion, that are wont to distinguish
 F between

between Grace and Vertue. They exchange the substance of true Goodness for meer Metaphors and Allegories. Metaphors the only cause of our present Schism ; And the only ground of the different Subdivisions among the Schismatics themselves. The Unaccountableness of Mens Conceits, That when the main Ends and Designs of Religion are undoubtedly subject to the Supreme Power, they should be so eager to exempt its Means and Circumstances from the same Authority. The Civil Magistrate may determine new Instances of Vertue ; how much more new Circumstances of Worship ? As he may enjoyn any thing in Morality, that contradicts not the ends of Morality ; so may he in Religious Worship, if he oppose not its Design. He may command any thing in the Worship of God, that does not tend to debauch Mens Practices, or their Conceptions of the Deity. All the subordinate Duties both of Morality and Religious Worship, are equally subject to the Determinations of Humane Authority.

¶ I. Having

¶ I.



Having in the former Chapter sufficiently made out my first Proposition; *viz.* That 'tis absolutely necessary to the Peace and Government of the World, that the Supreme Magistrate of every Common-wealth should be vested with a Power to govern the Consciences of Subjects in Affairs of Religion; I now proceed to the proof of the second thing proposed, *viz.* That those who would deprive the Supreme Civil Power of its Authority in reference to the Conduct of the Worship of God, are forced to allow it in other more material Parts of Religion, though they are both liable to the same Inconveniences and Objections; Where I shall have a fair opportunity to state the true Extent of the Magistrates Power over Conscience in reference to Divine Worship, by shewing it to be the same with his Power over Conscience in matters of Morality, and all other Affairs of Religion. And here it strikes me with wonder and amazement to consider, That Men should be so shy of granting the Supreme Magistrate a Power over their Consciences

in the Rituals and External Circumstances of Religious Worship, and yet be so free of forcing it upon him in the Essential Duties of Morality ; which are at least as great and material Parts of Religion, as pleasing to God, and as indispensibly necessary to Salvation , as any way of Worship in the World. The Precepts of the Moral Law are both perfective of our own Natures, and conducive to the Happiness of others ; and the Practice of Vertue consists in living suitably to the Dictates of Reason and Nature. And this is the substance and main Design of all the Laws of Religion, to oblige Mankind to behave themselves in all their actions as becomes Creatures endued with Reason and Understanding, and in ways suitable to Rational Beings, to prepare and qualifie themselves for the state of Glory and Immortality. And as this is the proper End of all Religion, That Mankind might live happily here , and happily hereafter; so to this end nothing contributes more than the Practice of all Moral Vertues*, which will effectually preserve the Peace and Happiness of Humane Societies, and advance the Mind of Man to a nearer approach to the Perfection

tion of the Divine Nature ; every particular Vertue being therefore such, because 'tis a Resemblance and Imitation of some of the Divine Attributes. So that Moral Vertue having the strongest and most necessary Influence upon the End of all Religion, *viz.* Man's Happiness ; 'tis not only its most material and useful Part, but the ultimate End of all its other Duties : And all true Religion can consist in nothing else but either the Practice of Vertue it self, or the use of those Means and Instruments that contribute to it.

§ 2. And this, beside the Rational Account of the thing it self, appears with an undeniable evidence from the best of Demonstrations, *i. e.* an Induction of all Particulars. The whole Duty of Man refers either to his Creator, or his Neighbour, or himself : All that concerns the two last is confessedly of a Moral Nature ; and all that concerns the first consists either in Praising of God, or Praying to him : The former is a Branch of the Vertue of Gratitude, and is nothing but a thankful and humble temper of Mind, arising from a sense of God's Greatness

in himself, and his Goodness to us : so that this part of Devotion issues from the same vertuous Quality, that is the Principle of all other Resentments and Expressions of Gratitude ; only those Acts of it that are terminate on God as their Object, are styled Religious : and therefore Gratitude and Devotion are not divers Things, but only different Names of the same Thing ; Devotion being nothing else but the Vertue of Gratitude towards God. The latter, *viz.* Prayer, is either put up in our own or other Mens behalfs : If for others, 'tis an Act of that Vertue we call Kindness or Charity : If for our selves, the things we pray for (unless they be the Comforts and Enjoyments of this Life) are some or other vertuous Qualities : and therefore the proper and direct use of Prayer is to be instrumental to the Vertues of Morality : So that all Duties of Devotion (excepting only our returns of Gratitude) are not Essential Parts of Religion, but are only in order to it, as they tend to the Practice of Vertue and Moral Goodness ; and their Goodness is derived upon them from the Moral Vertues to which they contribute ; and in the

the same proportion they are conducive to the ends of Vertue, they are to be valued among the Ministeries of Religion. All Religion then (I mean the Practical Part) is either Vertue it self, or some of its Instruments ; and the whole Duty of Man consists in being Vertuous ; and all that is enjoyn'd him beside, is in order to it. And what else do we find enforced and recommended in our Saviour's Sermons, beside heights of Morality ? What does St. *Paul* discourse of to *Felix* but Moral matters, *Righteousness, and Temperance, and Judgment to come* ? And what is it that Men set up against Morality, but a few figurative Expressions of it self, that without it are utterly insignificant ? 'Tis not enough (say they) to be completely Vertuous, unless we have Grace too : But when we have set aside all manner of Vertue, let them tell me what remains to be call'd Grace, and give me any Notion of it distinct from all Morality, that consists in the right order and government of our Actions in all our Relations, and so comprehends all our Duty : and therefore if Grace be not included in it, 'tis but a Phantasm, and an Imaginary thing. So

that if we strip those Definitions that some Men of late have bestowed upon it, of Metaphors and Allegories, it will plainly signifie nothing but a vertuous temper of Mind; and all that the Scripture intends by the Graces of the Spirit, are only Vertuous Qualities of the Soul, that are therefore styled Graces, because they were derived purely from Gods free Grace and Goodness, in that in the first Ages of Christianity he was pleased, out of his infinite concern for its Propagation, in a miraculous Manner to inspire its Converts with all sorts of Vertue. Wherefore the Apostle *St. Paul*, when he compiles a complete Catalogue of the Fruits of the Spirit, reckons up only Moral Vertues, *Gal. 5. 22.* Love, Joy or Chearfulness, Peaceableness, Patience, Gentleness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness, and Temperance; and elsewhere, *Titus 2. 11.* the same Apostle plainly makes the Grace of God to consist in Gratitude towards God, Temperance towards our selves, and Justice towards our Neighbours. *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should*

should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Where the whole Duty of Man is comprehended in living *Godly*, which is the Vertue of humble Gratitude towards God : *Soberly*, which contains the Vertues of Temperance, Chastity, Modesty, and all others that consist in the dominion of Reason over our sensual Appetites : *Righteously*, which implies all the Vertues of Justice and Charity, as Affability, Courtesie, Meekness, Candour, and Ingenuity.

¶ 3. So destructive of all true and real Goodness is the very Religion of those Men that are wont to set Grace at odds with Vertue, and are so far from making them the same, that they make them inconsistent ; and though a man be exact in all the Duties of Moral Goodness, yet if he be a Graceless Person (*i.e.* void of I know not what Imaginary Godliness) he is but in a cleaner way to Hell, and his Conversion is more hopeless than the vilest and most notorious Sinners ; and the Morally righteous Man is at a greater distance from Grace than the profane ; and better be leud and debauch'd, than live an honest and vertuous life,

life, if you are not of the Godly Party. *Bona Opera sunt pernicioſa ad ſalutem,* ſays *Flaccus Illiricus*. Moral Goodneſs is the greateſt Let to Converſion; and the prophaneſt wretches make better Saints than your Moral Formaliſts. And by this means they have brought into faſhion a Godlineſs without Religion, Zeal without Humanity, and Grace without good Nature or good Manners; have found out, in lieu of Moral Vertue, a Spiritual Divinity, that is made up of nothing elſe but certain Trains and Schemes of effeminate Follies and illiterate Enthuſiaſms; and inſtead of a ſober Devotion, a more ſpiritual and intimate way of Communion with God, that in truth conſiſts in little elſe but meeting together in private to prate Phraſes, make Faces, and rail at Carnal Reaſon (*i. e.* in their ſenſe all ſober and ſincere uſe of our Underſtandings in Spiritual Matters) whereby they have effectually turn'd all Religion into unaccountable Fanſies and Enthuſiaſms, dreſt it up with pompous and empty Schemes of Speech, and ſo embrace a few gawdy Metaphors and Allegories, inſtead of the ſubſtance of true and real Righteouſneſs.

And

And herein lies the most material difference between the sober Christians of the Church of *England*, and our modern Sectaries, That we express the Precepts and Duties of the Gospel in plain and intelligible Terms, whilst they trifle them away by childish Metaphors and Allegories, and will not talk of Religion but in barbarous and uncouth Similitudes; and (what is more) the different Subdivisions among the Sects themselves are not so much distinguish'd by any real diversity of Opinions, as by variety of Phrases and forms of Speech, that are the peculiar *Shibboleths* of each Tribe. One Party affect to lard their Discourses with clownish and slovenly Similitudes; another delights to roul in wanton and lascivious Allegories; and a third is best pleas'd with odd, unusual, unintelligible, and sometimes blasphemous Expressions. And whoever among them can invent any new Language, presently sets up for a Man of new Discoveries; and he that lights upon the prettiest Nonsense, is thought by the ignorant Rabble to unfold new Gospel-Mysteries. And thus is the Nation shattered into infinite Factions, with senseless and phantastick Phrases;

Phrases ; and the most fatal miscarriage of them all lies in abusing Scripture-Expressions , not only without but in contradiction to their sense. So that had we but an Act of Parliament to abridge Preachers the use of fullsom and luscious Metaphors, it might perhaps be an effectual Cure of all our present Distempers. Let not the Reader smile at the oddness of the Proposal : For were Men obliged to speak Sense as well as Truth, all the swelling Mysteries of Fanaticism would immediately sink into flat and empty Nonsense ; and they would be ashamed of such jejune and ridiculous Stuff as their admired and most profound Notions would appear to be, when they want the Varnish of fine Metaphors and glittering Allusions. In brief, were this a proper place to unravel all their affected Phrases and Forms of Speech, which they have learn'd like Parrots to prate by Rote, without having any Notion of the Things they signifie, it would be no unpleasant Task to demonstrate, That by them they either mean nothing at all, or some Part or Instrument of Moral Vertue. So that all Religion must of necessity be resolv'd into Enthusiasm or Morality.

ality. The former is meer Imposture, and therefore all that is true must be reduced to the latter; and whatever besides appertains to it, must be subservient to the Ends of Vertue: such are Prayer, Hearing Sermons, and all manner of Religious Ordinances, that have directly no other place in Religion, than as they are instrumental to a virtuous Life.

¶ 4. 'Tis certain then, That the Duties of Morality are the most weighty and material Concerns of Religion; and 'tis as certain, That the Civil Magistrate has Power to bind Laws concerning them upon the Consciences of Subjects: So that every Man's Conscience is and must be subject to the Commands of Lawful Superiours in the most important matters of Religion. And therefore is it not strange, that when the main Ends and Designs of all Religion are avowedly subject to the Supreme Power, that yet Men should be so impatient to exempt its Means and subordinate Instruments from the same Authority? What reason can the Wit of Man assign to restrain it from one, that will not much more restrain

strain it from both? Is not the right practice of Moral Duties as necessary a part of Religion, as any outward Form of Worship in the World? Are not wrong Notions of the Divine Worship as destructive of the Peace and settlement of Common-wealths, as the most vicious and licentious Debaucheries? Are not the rude Multitude more inclined to disturb Government by Superstition than by Licentiousness? And is there not vastly greater danger of the Magistrates erring in Matters of Morality, than in Forms and Ceremonies of Worship; in that those are the main, essential, and ultimate Duties of Religion; whereas these are at highest but their Instruments, and can challenge no other place in Religion, than as they are subservient to the purposes of Morality? Nay is it not still more unaccountable, that the Supreme Magistrate may not be permitted to determine the Circumstances and Appendages of the subordinate Ministeries to Moral Vertue, and yet should be allowed (in all Common-wealths) to determine the particular Acts and Instances of these Vertues themselves? For Example, Justice is a prime and natural Vertue,
and

and yet its particular Cases depend upon Humane Laws, that determine the bounds of *Meum* and *Tuum*: The Divine Law restrains *Titium* from invading *Caius's* Right and Propriety; but what that is, and when it is invaded, only the Laws of the Society they live in can determine. And there are some Cases that are Acts of Injustice in *England*, that are not so in *Italy*; otherwise all Places must be govern'd by the same Laws, and what is a Law to one Nation must be so to all the World. Whereas 'tis undeniably evident, That neither the Law of God nor of Nature determine the particular Instances of most Vertues, but for the most part leave that to the Constitutions of National Laws. They in general forbid Theft, Incest, Murder, and Adultery; but what these Crimes are, they determine not in all Cases, but is in most Particulars to be explained by the Civil Constitutions; and whatsoever the Law of the Land reckons among these Crimes, that the Law of God and of Nature forbids.

And now is it not strangely humour-
some to say, That Magistrates are entrust-
ed with so great Power over Mens Con-
sciences

sciences in these great and weighty Designs of Religion, and yet should not be trusted to govern the indifferent, or at least less material Circumstances of those things that can pretend to no other Goodness, than as they are Means serviceable to Moral Purposes? That they should have Power to make that a Particular of the Divine Law, that God has not made so; and yet not be able to determine the use of an indifferent Circumstance, because (forsooth) God has not determin'd it? In a word, That they should be fully impowered to declare new Instances of Vertue and Vice, and to introduce new Duties in the most important parts of Religion, and yet should not have Authority enough to declare the use and decency of a few Circumstances in its subservient and less material Concerns?

¶ 5. The whole State of Affairs is briefly this; Man is sent into the World to live happily here, and prepare himself for Happiness hereafter; this is attain'd by the practice of Moral Vertues and Pious Devotions; and wherein these mainly consist, Almighty Goodness has declared

clared by the Laws of Nature and Revelation: but because in both there are changeable Cases and Circumstances of things, therefore has God appointed his Trustees and Officials here on Earth to Act and Determine in both, according to all Accidents and Emergencies of Affairs, to assign new Particulars of the Divine Law, to declare new Bounds of right and wrong, which the Law of God neither does nor can limit; because of necessity they must in a great measure depend upon the Customs and Constitutions of every Common-wealth. And in the same manner are the Circumstances and outward Expressions of Divine Worship, because they are variable according to the Accidents of Time and Place, entrusted (with less danger of Error) with the same Authority. And what Ceremonies this appoints (unless they are apparently repugnant to their prime end) become Religious Rites; as what particular Actions it constitutes in any Species of Vertue, become new Instances of that Vertue, unless they apparently contradict its Nature and Tendency.

Now the two Primary Designs of all Religion, are, either to express our ho-

G nourable

nourable Opinion of the Deity, or to advance the Interests of Vertue and Moral Goodness ; so that no Rites or Ceremonies can be esteemed unlawful in the Worship of God, unless they tend to debauch men either in their Practices, or their Conceptions of the Deity : And 'tis upon one or both of these Accounts that any Rites and Forms of Worship become criminally superstitious ; and such were the *Lupercalia*, the *Elenfinian* Mysteries, the Feasts of *Bacchus*, *Flora*, and *Venus*, because they were but so many Festivals of Lust and Debauchery ; and such were the salvage and bloody Sacrifices to *Saturn*, *Bellona*, *Moloch*, *Baal-Peor*, and all other *seixm puciera* of the Ancient Paganism ; because they supposed the Divine Being to take pleasure in the Miseries and Tortures of its Creatures : And such is all Idolatry, in that it either gives right Worship to a wrong Object, or wrong Worship to a right one, or at least represents an infinite Majesty by Images and Resemblances of finite things, and so reflects disparagement upon some of the Divine Attributes, by fastning dishonourable Weaknesses and Imperfections upon the Divine Nature.

Nature. As for these, and the like Rites and Ceremonies of Worship; no Humane Power can command them, because they are directly contradictory to the Ends of Religion; but as for all others that are not so, any lawful Authority may as well enjoyn them, as it may adopt any Actions whatsoever into the Duties of Morality that are not contrary to the Ends of Morality.

¶ 6. But a little farther to illustrate this, we may observe, That in matters both of Moral Vertue and Divine Worship there are some Rules of Good and Evil that are of an Eternal and unchangeable Obligation, and these can never be prejudiced or altered by any Humane Power; because the Reason of their Obligation arises from a necessity and constitution of Nature, and therefore must be as Perpetual as that: But then there are other Rules of Duty that are alterable according to the various Accidents, Changes, and Conditions of Humane Life, and depend chiefly upon Contracts, and Positive Laws of Kingdoms; these suffer Variety, because their

Matter and their Reason does so. Thus in the matter of Murder there are some Instances of an unalterable Nature, and others that are changeable according to the various Provisions of Positive Laws and Constitutions. To take away the Life of an Innocent Person is forbidden by such an indispensable Law of Nature, that no Humane Power can any way directly or indirectly make it become Lawful, in that no Positive Laws can so alter the Constitution of Nature, as to make this Instance of Villany cease to be mischievous to Mankind ; and therefore 'tis Capital in all Nations of the World. But then there are other Particular Cases of this Crime, that depend upon Positive Laws, and so by consequence are liable to change according to the different Constitutions of the Commonwealths men live in. Thus though in *England* 'tis Murther for an Injured Husband to kill an Adulteress taken in the Act of Uncleanness, because 'tis forbidden by the Laws of this Kingdom ; yet in *Spain* and among the old *Romans* it was not, because their Laws permitted it ; and if the Magistrate himself may punish the Crime with Death, he may appoint

appoint whom he pleases to be his Executioner. And the Case is the same in reference to Divine Worship, in which there are some things of an absolute and indispensable Necessity, and others of a Transient and changeable Obligation: Thus 'tis absolutely necessary every Rational Creature should make returns of Gratitude to its Creator, from which no Humane Power can restrain it; but then for the outward Expressions and Significations of this Duty, they are for the most part Good or Evil according to the Customs and Constitutions of different Nations, unless in the two forementioned Cases, that they either countenance Vice, or disgrace the Deity. But as for all other Rituals, Ceremonies, Postures, and manners of performing the outward Expressions of Devotion, that are not chargeable with one or both of these, nothing can hinder their being capable of being adopted into the Ministries of Divine Service, or exempt them from being subject to the Determinations of Humane Power. And thus the Parallel holds in all Cases between the Secondary and Emergent Laws of Morality, and the Subordinate and Instrumental Rules

of Worship ; they both equally pass an Obligation upon all men, to whom they are prescribed, unless they directly contradict the ends of their Institution.

And now from this more general Consideration of the Agreement between matters of meer Worship and other Duties of Morality in reference to the Power of the Civil Magistrate, we may proceed by some more particular accounts to discover, how his Dominion over both is of equal extent, and restrain'd within the same bounds and measures ; and that in what cases soever he may exercise Jurisdiction over Conscience in matters of Morality, in all the same he may exercise the same Power in Concerns of Religious Worship ; and on the contrary in what cases his Power over matters of Religion is restrain'd, in all the same is it limited as to things of a Moral Nature : Whence it must appear with a clear and irresistible Evidence, That mens right to Liberty of Conscience is the same in both to all Cases, Niceties, and Circumstances of things, and that they may as rationally challenge a freedom from the Laws of Justice as from those

those of Religion, and that to grant it in either is equally destructive of all Order and Government, and equally tends to reduce all Societies to Anarchy and Confusion.

CHAP. III.


A more Particular State of the Controversie, concerning the Inward Actions of the Mind, or Matters of meer Conscience.

The Contents.

M*Ankind have a Liberty of Conscience over all their Actions, whether Moral or strictly Religious, as far as it concerns their Judgments, but not their Practices. Of the Nature of Christian*

Liberty. It relates to our Thoughts, and not to our Actions. It may be preserved inviolable under outward Restraints. Christian Liberty consists properly in the Restauration of the Mind of Man to its Natural Priviledge from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law. The substantial part of Religious worship is Internal, and out of the reach of the Civil Magistrate. External worship is no part of Religion. It is and must be left undetermined by the Law of God. Sacrifices the most antient Expressions of Outward worship were purely of Humane Institution. Though their being expiatory depended upon a Positive Law of God, yet their most proper and original Use, viz. To express the Significations of a Grateful Mind depended on the Wills of Men. Of their first Original among the Heathens. The Reason why God prescribed the particular Rites and Ceremonies of outward worship to the Jews. Under the Christian Dispensation he has left the disposal of outward worship to the Power and Discretion of the Church. The Impertinency of mens Clamours against Significant Ceremonies, when 'tis the only use of Ceremonies to be significant,

significant. The Signification of all Ceremonies equally Arbitrary. The Signification of Ceremonies is of the same Nature with that of words. And men may as well be offended at the one as the other.

¶ 1.  Ifst then, Let all Matters of meer Conscience, whether purely Moral or Religious, be subject to Conscience meerly; *i.e.* Let men think of things according to their own perswasions, and assert the Freedom of their Judgments against all the Powers of the Earth. This is the Prerogative of the Mind of Man within its own Dominions; its Kingdom is intellectual, and seated in the Thoughts, not Actions of Men; and therefore no Hamane Power does, or can prescribe to any mans Opinions and secret Thoughts, but men will think as they please in spight of all their Decrees, and the Understanding will remain free when every thing else is bound. And this Sovereignty of Conscience is no entrenchment upon that of Princes: because 'tis concern'd only in such matters as are of a quite different Nature from their Affairs,

Affairs, and gives no restraint to their commanding Power over the Actions of men ; for meer Opinion, whilst such, has no Influence upon the Good or Evil of Humane Society, that is the proper object of Government ; and therefore as long as our Thoughts are secret, and lock't up within our own breasts, they are out of the reach of all Humane Power. But as for Matters that are not confined within the Territories of meer Conscience, but come forth into outward Action, and appear in the Societies of men, there is no remedy but they must be subject to the Cognizance of Humane Laws, and come within the Verge of Humane Power ; because by these Societies subsist, and Humane Affairs are transacted. And therefore it concerns those, whose Office it is to secure the peace and tranquillity of Mankind, to govern and manage them in order to the Publick Good. So that 'tis but a vain and frivolous pretense, when men plead with so much noise and clamour for the Sacred and Inviolable Rights of Conscience, and apparently invade or infringe Magistrates Power, by submitting its Commands to the Authority of every Subjects

Subjects Conscience ; because the Commands of Lawful Authority are so far from invading its proper Liberty, that they cannot reach it, in that 'tis seated in that part of Man, of whose Transactions the Civil Power can take no Cognizance. All Humane Authority and Jurisdiction extends no farther than mens outward Actions, these are the proper Object of all their Laws : Whereas Liberty of Conscience is Internal and Invisibile, and confined to the Minds and Judgments of men ; and whilst Conscience Acts within its proper Sphere, the Civil Power is so far from doing it violence, that it never can. But when this great and imperious Faculty passes beyond its own peculiar Bounds, and would invade the Magistrates Authority by exercising an unaccountable Dominion within his Territories, or by venting such wild Opinions among his Subjects, as he apprehends to tend to the disturbance of the Publick Peace, then does it concern him to give check to its proceedings as much as to all other Invasions ; for the care of the Publick Good being his Duty, as well as Interest, it cannot but be in his Power to restrain or permit Actions, as they are conducive

conducibile to that End. Mankind therefore have the same Natural Right to Liberty of Conscience in matters of Religious Worship as in Affairs of Justice and Honesty, *i.e.* a Liberty of Judgment, but not of Practice; they have an inviolable freedom to examine the Goodness of all Laws Moral and Ecclesiastical, and to judge of them by their suitability to the natural Reasons of Good and Evil: but as for the Practice and all outward Actions either of Vertue or Devotion, they are equally governable by the Laws and Constitutions of Common-wealths; and men may with the same Pretences of Reason challenge an Exemption from all Humane Laws in Matters of Common Honesty upon the Score of the Freedom of their Consciences, as they plead a Liberty from all Authority in Duties of Religious Worship upon the same account; because they have a freedom of Judgment in both, but of Practice in neither.

§ 2. And upon the reasonableness of this Principle is founded the Duty (or rather Privilege) of Christian Liberty; *viz.* To assert the Freedom of the Mind
of

of Man, as far as 'tis not inconsistent with the Government of the World, in that a sincere and impartial use of our own Understandings is the First and Fundamental Duty of Humane Nature. Hence it is that the Divine Providence is so highly solicitous not to have it farther restrained than needs must; and therefore in all Matters of pure Speculation it leaves the Mind of Man entirely free to judge of the Truth and Falshood of things, and will not suffer it to be usurp'd upon by any Authority whatsoever: And whatsoever Opinion any man entertains of things of this Nature, he injures no man by it, and therefore no man can have any reason to commence any Quarrel with him for it; Every man here judges for himself and not for others, and Matters of meer Opinion having no reference to the Publick, there is no need of any Publick Judgment to determine them. But as for those Actions that are capable of having any Influence upon the Publick Good or Ill of Mankind, though they are liable to the Determinations of the Publick Laws, yet the Law of God will not suffer them to be determin'd farther than is requisite to the Ends of Govern-

Government : And in those very things in which it has granted the Civil Magistrate a Power over the Practices of men, it permits them not to exercise any Authority over their Judgments, but leaves them utterly free to judge of them as far as they are Objects of meer Opinion, and relate not to the Common Interest of Mankind. And hence, though the Commands of our Lawful Superiours may change Indifferent things into Necessary Duties, yet they cannot restrain the Liberty of our Minds from judging things thus determin'd to remain in their own Nature Indifferent ; and the Reason of our Obligation to do them is not fetcht from any Antecedent Necessity in themselves, but from the Supervening Commands of Authority, to which Obedience in all things Lawful is a Necessary Duty. So that Christian Liberty, or the Inward Freedom of our Judgments may be preserved Inviolable under the restraints of the Civil Magistrate, which are Outward, and concern only the Actions, not Judgments of Men ; because the Outward Determination to one Particular rather than another does not abrogate the Inward Indifferency of the thing.

thing it self; and the Duty of our Acting according to the Laws arises not from any Opinion of the Necessity of the thing it self, but either from some Emergent and Changeable Circumstances of Order and Decency, or from a sense of the Absolute Indispensableness of the Duty of Obedience. Therefore the whole Affair of Christian Liberty relates only to our Inward Judgment of things; and provided this be kept inviolate, it matters not (as to that Concern) what restraints are laid upon our Outward Actions. In that though the Gospel has freed our Consciences from the Power of things, yet it has not from that of Government; we are free from the Matter, but not from the Authority of Humane Laws; and as long as we obey the Determinations of our Superiours with an Opinion of the Indifferency of the things themselves, we retain the Power of our Christian Liberty, and are still free as to the Matter of the Law, though not as to the Duty of Obedience.

§ 3. Neither is this Prerogative of our Christian Liberty so much any new Favour granted in the Gospel, as the Restauration

Restoration of the Mind of Man to its Natural Privilege, by Exempting us from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, whereby things in themselves Indifferent were tyed upon the Conscience with as indispensable an Obligation, as the Rules of Essential Goodness and Equity, during the whole Period of the *Mosaick* Dispensation; which being Cancell'd by the Gospel, those Indifferent things, that had been made Necessary by a Divine Positive Command, return'd to their own Nature, to be used or omitted only as occasion should direct. And upon this Account was it that *St. Paul*, though he were so earnest an Assertor of his Christian Liberty against the Doctrine of the Necessity of Jewish Ceremonies, never scrupled to use them, when ever he thought it Serviceable to the Interests of Christianity; as is apparent in his Circumcision of *Timothy*, to which he would never have condescended out of Observation of the *Mosaick* Law, and yet did not in the least scruple to do it for other Purposes as Prudence and Discretion should direct him. And though in his Discourses of Christian Liberty he Instances only in Circumcision, Meats and Drinks,

Drinks, and other Ceremonial Ordinances, which were then the Particulars most in Dispute between the Christians and the Jews; yet by the clearest Analogy of Reason the Case is the same as to the Judicial Law, and all other things commanded by *Moses*, that were not either Rules of Eternal Goodness, or expressly establish'd in the Gospel: This being its clearest and most important Design to relieve Mankind from all the burdensome and Arbitrary Impositions of *Moses*, that were scarce capable of any other Goodness than their being Instances of Obedience; and to restore us to such a Religion, as was most suitable to the perfection of Humane Nature; and to tye no other Laws upon us, than such whose Natural and Intrinsic Goodness should carry with them their own Eternal Obligation. And therefore whatsoever our Superiours impose upon us, whether in Matters of Religious Worship, or any other Duties of Morality, it neither is, nor can be any entrenchment upon our Christian Liberty, provided it be not imposed with an Opinion of the Antecedent Necessity of the thing it self.

¶ 4. Now the Design of what I have discoursed upon this Article of Christian Liberty, is not barely to shew the manifest Impertinency of all those little Objections men force from it against the Civil Magistrates Jurisdiction over the outward Concerns of Religion, whereas this relates entirely to things of a quite different Nature, and is only concern'd in the inward Actions of the Mind: but withal my Purpose is mainly, by exempting all Internal Acts of the Soul from the Empire of Humane Laws, to shew that Religion, properly so call'd, is of all Vertues the least obnoxious to the abuse of Government, in that the whole Substance of Religious Worship is transacted within the Mind of Man, and dwells in our Hearts and Thoughts beyond the reach of Princes; the Soul is its proper Seat and Temple, and there Men may Worship their God as they please, without offending their Prince. For the Essence of Religious Worship consists in nothing else but a grateful sense and temper of Mind towards the Divine Goodness, and so can reside in those Faculties only that are capable of being
 affected

affected with Gratitude and Veneration :
 And as for all that concerns External
 Worship, 'tis no part of Religion it self,
 but only an Instrument to expresse the
 Inward Veneration of the Mind by some
 Outward Action or Posture of the Body.
 Upon which account it is that the Divine
 Wisdom has so little concern'd it self to
 prescribe any particular Forms of Divine
 Service ; for though the Christian Laws
 command us by some Exteriour Signs to
 expresse our Interiour Piety; yet they
 have no where set down any particular
 Expressions of Worship and Adoration.
 And indeed the Exteriour Significations
 of Honour being so changeable accord-
 ing to the variety of Customs and Places,
 there could be no particular Forms or
 Fashions prescribed : for so some would
 have been obliged to signifie their Ho-
 nourable Sentiments of God by Marks
 of Scorn and Dishonour ; because those
 Fashions and Postures which in some
 Places are Indications of Respect, are to
 others Signs of Contempr. So mad and
 Seditious is the Humour of those Men,
 who brand all those Forms of Divine
 Service, that are not expressly enjoyn'd in
 the Holy Volumn, with the odious

Titles of Superstition and Will-worship; and so in one Sentence condemn all the Churches in the World, seeing there is not any one that has not Peculiar Rites and Customs of its own, that were never prescribed nor practiced by our Saviour or his Apostles. And in all Ages of the World God has left the management of his Outward Worship to the Discretion of Men, unless when to determine some particular Forms has been useful to some other purposes.

¶ 5. The Antientest and most Universally practised way of expressing Divine Worship and Adoration was by Offering of Sacrifices; those First Ages of the World conceiving it a proper and natural way of acknowledging their entire Dependence upon, and Gratitude towards God, by publickly presenting him with a portion of the Best and most Precious things they had: and God was well-pleased with them, not because he at all delighted in the blood of Bulls and Goats, but because they were the Pledges and Significations of a Grateful Mind. And yet this outward Expression of Divine Worship, notwithstanding its Universality

versality and Antiquity, was only made
 choice of by good men as a fit way of
 intimating the Pious and Grateful Resent-
 ments of their Minds, and cannot in the
 least pretend to owe its Original to any
 Divine Institution, seeing there appears
 not any Shadow of a Command for it;
 and to say it was Commanded, though
 'tis no where Recorded, is to take the
 Liberty of saying any thing without
 Proof or Evidence. That indeed Sacri-
 fices became Expiatory, and that the
 Life of a Beast should be accepted to
 redeem the Life of a Man, depended
 purely upon Positive Institution, *Lev. 17.*
11. For the Life of the Flesh is in the
Bloud, and I have given it to you upon the
Altar to make an Attonement for your
Souls; for 'tis the Bloud that maketh an
Attonement for the Soul. Now it was a
 Matter of meer Grace and Favour in
 God to exchange the Bloud of a Beast
 for the Bloud of a Man, which was real-
 ly Forfeited for every Transgression of
 that Law, that was Establish't upon no
 less Sanction that the Threatening of
 Death. In which Commutation of the
 Forfeiture was an equal mixture of the
 Divine Mercy and Severity, hereby he at

once signified his Hatred to Sin, and his Compassion to Sinners; in that though he might have remitted the Offense without exacting the Penalty, yet to shew his Implacable Hatred against Sin, and withal the more to affright men from its Commission, he would never remit its Guilt without some sort of recompense and Expiation. But setting aside this Positive Institution of Sacrifices and Consumptive Oblations, their Prime and Natural Use was only to express the Significations of a Grateful Mind, as sufficiently appears not only in the Religion of the Antient Jews, but Heathens too. Among whom the First and Earliest Footsteps of the Worship of God appear in their Harvest Sacrifices and Oblations, when they presented the Deity with a Parcel of their Annual Returns in acknowledgment of his Bounty and Providence: Crying, Harvest in was their most Solemn, and most Antient Festival, *Arist. Nicomach.* l. 8. c. 11. 'Αὐτὰρ ἀρχαῖα θυσία καὶ σπόδος παλαιότερα γίνεται κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ θεοῦ συγκυροῦς, ὅτε ἀσπείρει. The Antient Sacrifices and Festival Meetings appear to have been at first Instituted upon the ingathering of their Fruits, such were the Offerings

Offerings of their First Fruits, which was a decent and suitable way of acknowledging their Homage and Gratitude to their Supreme Lord ; and had they not been directed to a wrong Deity (as probably they were to the Sun) they might have been no less Pleasing to the Almighty, than *Cornelius's* Alms and Devotions ; because God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him.

¶ 6. In the *Mosaick* Dispensation indeed God took special care to prescribe the particular Rites and Ceremonies of his Worship, not so much by reason of the Necessity of the Thing it self, as because of the Sottishness and Stupidity of that Age ; in that all the Religions in the World were lamentably degenerated into the most Sordid and Idolatrous Superstition, and the Jewish Nation were sottishly addicted to the absurd Customs of their Neighbours ; and therefore the Divine Wisdom enjoyn'd them the most contrary Usages, as a Fence to keep them from passing over to the Religion of the Gentiles. But when Mankind

was grown up to a Riper Understanding, and could discern that Religion was something else beside Customs and Ceremonies; then did God Cancel the Old Discipline of the Law, and by the Ministry of Jesus Christ establish'd a more Manly and Rational Dispensation; In which as he has been more solicitous to acquaint us with the Main and Fundamental Affairs of Religion, so has he scarce at all concern'd himself in Exterior Rites and Significations (having Instituted only two, *viz.* The two Sacraments that are distinguish'd from all other Ceremonies, by their being Federal and peculiarly significative of the Covenant between God and Man, seal'd by the First, renewed and confirmed by the Second) but as for all other Rites and Ceremonies of External Service, he has left their entire Disposal to the Power and Discretion of the Church it self, knowing that as long as Men had Wit and Reason enough to manage the Civil Affairs of Common-wealths, they could not want Prudence to Judge what Circumstances were conducive to Order and Decency in Publick Worship. And if we take a Surveigh of all the Forms of
Divine

Divine Service practis'd in the Christian Church, there is not any of them can so much as pretend to be appointed in the Word of God, but depend on the Authority of the Civil Power in the same manner as all Customs and Laws of Civil Government do. And therefore to quarrel with those Forms of Publick Worship, that are establish'd by Authority, only because they are Humane Institutions, is at once notorious Schism and Rebellion: For where a Religion is Establish'd by the Laws, whoever openly refuses Obedience plainly Rebels against the Government, Rebellion being properly nothing else but an open denial of Obedience to the Civil Power. Nor can Men of this Principle live Peaceably in any Church in Christendom, in that there is not a Church in the World, that has not Peculiar Rites and Customs and Laws of Government and Discipline.

¶ 7. But of this I shall have occasion to Account elsewhere, and shall rather choose to observe here, from what I have discours'd of the Use and Nature of Outward Worship, the Prodigious Impertinency

pertinency of that clamour some men
 have for so many years kept up against
 the Institution of Significant Ceremonies;
 when 'tis the only Use of Ceremonies, as
 well as all other outward Expressions of
 Religion, to be significant: In that all
 Worship is only an Outward Sign of In-
 ward Honour, and is indifferently per-
 form'd either by Words or Actions; for
 respect may as well be signified by
 Deeds, and Postures, and Visible Solem-
 nities as by Solemn Expressions: Thus
 to approach the Divine Majesty with
 such Gestures as are wont to betoken Re-
 verence and Humility is as proper a
 Piece of Worship, as to Celebrate his
 Greatness by Solemn Praises: And to
 offer Sacrifices and Oblations was among
 the Antients the same sort of Worship
 as to return Thanksgivings, they being
 both equally Outward Signs of Inward
 Love and Gratitude. And therefore there
 can be no more Exception against the Sig-
 nification of Ceremonies than of Words,
 seeing this is the proper Office of both in
 the Worship of God.

And as all Forms, and Ceremonies,
 and Outward Actions of External
 Worship are in a manner equally Signi-
 ficant,

ficant, so are they equally Arbitrary; only some happen to be more Universally Practised, and others to be Confined to some particular Times and Places: Kneeling, lying Prostrate, being Bare-headed, Lifting up the Hands or Eyes are not more naturally Significant of Worship and Adoration than putting off the Shoes, bowing the Head, or bending the Body; and if some are more generally used than others, that proceeds not from their Natural Significancy, but from Custome and Casual Prescriptions: and to Bow the Body, when we mention the Name of *Jesús*, is as much a natural signification of Honour to his Person, as Kneeling, or being Bare-headed, or Lifting up the Hands or Eyes, when we offer up our Prayers to him. But if all Outward Actions become to betoken Honour by Institution, then whatsoever Outward Signs are appointed by the Commonwealth, unless they are Customary Marks of Contempt, and so carry in them some Antecedent Undecency, are proper Signs of Worship; for if Actions are made Significant by Agreement, those are most so whose signification is ratified by Publick Consent.

§ 8. So that all the Magistrates Power of instituting Significant Ceremonies amounts to no more than a Power of Determining what shall or shall not be Visible Signs of Honour, and this certainly can be no more Usurpation upon the Consciences of Men, than if the Sovereign Authority should take upon it self (as some Princes have done) to define the Signification of Words. For as Words do not naturally denote those Things which they are used to represent, but have their Import Stampt upon them by Consent and Institution, and may, if Men would agree to it among themselves, be made Marks of Things quite contrary to what they now signify: So the same Gestures and Actions are indifferently capable of signifying either Honour or Contumely; and therefore that they may have a certain and settled meaning, 'tis necessary their Signification should be Determined: and unless this be done either by some Positive Command, or Publick Consent, or some other way, there can be no such thing as Publick Worship in the World, in that its proper End and Usefulness is to express

exprefs Mens Agreement in giving Honour to the Divine Majesty : and therefore unless the Signs by which this Honour is signified be Publick and Uniform, 'tis not Publick Worship, because there is no Publick Signification of Honour. So far is it from being unlawful for Governours to define Significant Ceremonies in Divine Worship, that it is rather Necessary, in that unless they were defined, it would cease to be Publick Worship : And when different Men Worship God by different Actions, according to their different Fancies, 'tis not Publick, but Private Worship; in that they are not Publick, but Private Signs of Honour. So that Uniformity in the Outward Actions of Religious Worship is of the same Use, as certainty in the Signification of Words, because otherwise they were no Publick Expressions of Honour. And therefore, to sum up the whole Result of this Discourse : If all Internal Actions of the Soul are beyond the Jurisdiction of Humane Power, if by them the Substance of Religious Worship be perform'd, if all Outward Forms of Worship have no other Use, than only to be Instruments to exprefs
 Inward

Inward Religion, and if the Signification of Actions be of the same Nature with that of Words; then when the Civil Magistrate takes upon him to determine any particular Forms of Outward Worship, 'tis, after all that hideous and ridiculous Noise that is raised against it, of no worse Consequence, than if he should go about to define the Signification of all Words used in the Worship of God.


CHAP. IV.

Of the Nature of all Actions Intrinsically Evil, and their Exemption from the Authority of Humane Laws, against Mr. Hobs; with a full Confutation of his whole Hypothesis of Government.

The Contents.

NO Magistrate can Command Actions Internally Evil. The Reason hereof is, not because Men are in any thing free from the Supreme Authority in Earth, but because they are subject to a Superiour in Heaven. To take off all Obligations Antecedent to Humane Laws is, utterly to destroy all Government. Mr Hobs
his

his Hypothesis concerning the Nature and Original of Government proposed. Its Absurdity demonstrated from its Inconsistency with the Natural Constitution of Things. The Principles of Government are to be adapted not to an Imaginary, but to the Real State of Nature. This Hypothesis apparently denies either the Being of God, or the Goodness and Wisdom of Providence. It irrecoverably destroys the Safety of all Societies of Mankind in the World. It leaves us in as miserable Condition under the State of Government, as we were in his supposed Natural State of War. It Enervates all its own Laws of Nature by Founding the Reason of their Obligation upon meer Self-interest. which false and absurd Principle being removed, all that is Base, or Peculiar in the whole Hypothesis is utterly Cashier'd.

¶ 1.  When any thing that is Apparently and Intrinsically Evil is the Matter of an Humane Law, whether it be of a Civil or Ecclesiastical Concern, here God is
to

to be obeyed rather than Man: No Circumstances can alter the Rules of Prime and Essential Rectitude, their Goodness is Eternal and Unchangeable. And therefore in all such Actions Disobedience to Humane Laws is so far from being a Sin, that it becomes an Indispensable Duty. Where the Good or Evil of an Action is Determined by the Law of Nature, no Positive Humane Law can take off its Morality; because 'tis in it self repugnant to the Principles of Right Reason, and by Consequence as unchangeable as that. And therefore if the Supreme Magistrate should make a Law not to believe the Being of God or Providence, the Truth of the Gospel, the Immortality of the Soul; that Law can no more bind, than if a Prince should Command a Man to murder his Father, or to ravish his Mother; because the Obligatory Power of all such Laws is antecedently rescinded by a stronger and more Indispensable Obligation. And thus has every Man a Natural Right to be Vertuous, and no Authority whatsoever can deny him the Liberty of Acting Vertuously without being guilty of the Foulest Tyranny and Injustice: Not so
 1 much

much because Subjects are in any thing free from the Authority of the Supreme Power on Earth, as because they are subject to a Superiour in Heaven; and they are only then excused from the Duty of Obedience to their Sovereign, when they cannot give it without Rebellion against God. So that it is not Originally any Right of their own, that exempts them from a Subjection to the Sovereign Power in all Things; but 'tis purely Gods Right of Governing his own Creatures, that Magistrates then invade, when they make Edicts to violate or controule his Laws.

And those who would take off from the Consciences of Men all Obligations antecedent to those of Humane Laws, instead of making the Power of Princes Supreme, Absolute, and Uncontroulable, they utterly enervate all their Authority, and set their Subjects at perfect Liberty from all their Commands. For if we once remove all the antecedent Obligations of Conscience and Religion, Men will be no further bound to Submit to their Laws, than only as themselves shall see Convenient; and if they are under no other Restraint, it will be their
Wisdom

Wisdom to Rebel as oft as it is their Interest. In that the Laws of Superiours passing no Obligation upon the Consciences of Subjects, they neither are, nor can be under any stronger Engagements to Subjection, than to preserve themselves from the Penalties and Inflictions of the Law ; and so by consequence may despise its Obligation, when ever they can hope to escape its Punishment. Now, how must this weaken the Power, and supplant the Thrones of Princes, if every Subject may despise their Laws, or invade their Sovereignty, when ever he can hope to build his own Fortune upon their Ruins ? How would it expose their Scepters to the continual Attempts of Rebels and Usurpers, when every one, that has strength enough to wrest it out of his Princes hands, has Right and Title enough to hold it ? What security could Princes have of their Subjects Loyalty, that will own their Power, as long as it shall be their Interest ; and when it ceases to be so, call it Tyranny ? How shall they ever be secured by any Promises, Oaths, and Covenants of Allegiance, that have no other band but Self-security, or hope of Exemption from the Penalties

of the Law? Will not the most Sacred Bonds and Compacts leave them in as insecure a Condition as they found them in? In that Self-advantage would have kept their Subjects Loyal and Obedient without Oaths, and nothing else will do it with them, and therefore they can add no new Obligations to that of Interest: For if to perform their Covenants be advantageous, they are bound to perform them by the Laws of Prudence and Discretion without the Oath as much as with it; if disadvantageous, no Oath can oblige them; in that Interest and Self-preservation is the only enforcement of all their Covenants: and therefore when that Tye happens to cease, their Obligation becomes Null and Void, and they may observe them if they please, and if they please break them.

¶ 2. But the Vanity and Groundlessness of this Opinion will more fully appear, by discovering the lamentable Foundation, on which it stands; and that is a late wild Hypothesis concerning the Nature and Original of Government, which is briefly this: That the Natural Condition of Mankind is a State and Posture of
War

War of every man against every man, in that all men being born in a Condition of Equality, they have all an Equal Right to all things ; and because all cannot enjoy all, hence every man becomes an Enemy to every man : in which State of Hostility there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as Anticipation, that is by Force or Wiles to master the Persons of all men he can, till he see no other Power great enough to endanger himself : So that there is no Remedy but that in the State of Nature all men must be obliged to seek and contrive, in order to their own Security, one anothers Destruction. But because in this Condition Mankind must for ever groan under all the Miseries and Calamities of War, therefore they have wisely chosen by mutual consent to enter into Contracts and Covenants of mutual trust, in which every man has, in order to his own Security, been content to relinquish his natural and unlimited Right to every thing ; and hereby they enter into a state of Peace and Government, in which every man engages by Solemn Oath and Covenant to submit himself to the Publick Laws in order to his own Private

Safety. So that, according to this Hypothesis, there are no Rules of Right or Wrong antecedent to the Laws of the Common-wealth, but all men are at absolute Liberty to do as they please; and how cruel soever they may be to one another, they can never be injurious, there being nothing just or unjust but what is made so by the Laws of the Society, to which all its Members Covenant to submit when they enter into it.

This Hypothesis, as odd as it is, is become the Standard of our Modern Politicks; by which men that pretend to understand the real Laws of Wisdom and Subtilty must square their Actions, and therefore is swallowed down, with as much greediness as an Article of Faith, by the Wild and Giddy People of the Age. Of the Reality whereof none can doubt but Fops and raw-brain'd Fellows, that understand nothing of the World, or the Complexion of Humane Nature. Now 'tis but labour in vain to go about to confute this Phantastick Theory of things, only by demonstrating the Groundlessness of the Conceit; it being the Fashion and Humour of those men I
have

have to do with, to embrace any Hypothesis how precarious soever, if it do but serve the purpose of Baseness and Irreligion: and therefore I shall not content my self with barely proving the weakness of its Foundation, but shall confute and shame it too, by shewing it to be palpably false, absurd, and mischievous from these ensuing Considerations.

§ 3. First then the Hypothesis, which he laies as the Basis of all his Discourse, is infinitely false and absurd: For what can be more incongruous, than to proceed upon the supposal of such a State of Nature as never was, nor ever shall be; and is so far from being sutable to the Natural Frame of things, that 'tis absolutely inconsistent with it? And though Philosophers are so civil among themselves (with how much Reason I now determine not) as to allow one another the Liberty, when they frame Theories and Hypotheses of things, to suppose some precarious Principles; yet are they never so fond as to grant such Fundamental Suppositions, as are apparently false and incongruous and repugnant to the Real State of things: or if any will

take upon them that unwarrantable Liberty of Invention, yet however it would be monstrously impertinent to lay down their own lamentable Fictions, as the Fundamental Reasons of the Truth, and Reality of things. And yet with this gross and inexcusable Absurdity is this Hypothesis most notoriously chargeable. For when it has once supposed (without ever attempting to prove it) that the State of Nature is a State of War, and that by Nature all men have a Right to all things, and come into the World without any Obligations to mutual Justice and Honesty, it from thence concludes: That in a bare State of Nature there can be no right and wrong ; That what mischiefs soever men may do to each other, they can do no Injuries ; That the first Reason and Foundation of all Natural Right is Self-preservation, and that in pursuance of this Principle men enter into Societies, bind themselves to an observance of the Laws of Justice and natural Equity by mutual Bonds and Covenants, and think themselves engaged to observe them only in order to Self-Interest. So that if we remove this *supposed*, this Fundamental Falshood, That the
State

State of Nature is a State of War and Anarchy, all the subsequent Propositions will immediately appear to be as Groundless, as they are Unreasonable; and there will not remain the least shadow of Reason to believe private Interest, the only Reason of right and wrong, or the first and fundamental Law of Nature; and this Authors City will appear to stand upon no firmer Foundation than a Fable and a Falshood; and his Hypothesis so grossly Absurd and Incongruous, as would be highly blameable in the contrivance of a Dramatick Plot.

But if instead of conforming the Principles of Justice and Government to this false and imaginary State of the World, we take a serious view of the true and real Posture of the Nature of things; the Dictates of Reason that must naturally result from thence, will be as contrary to some of those this Author hath assign'd, as the Natural State of things is to this Imaginary one: Namely, that there was a First Cause of Humane Kind, and that this First Cause is a Being endued with Goodness and Equity; and therefore that when he made Mankind, he design'd their Welfare and

and Felicity; and by consequence created them in such a condition, in which they might acquire it. All men therefore having by the Divine Appointment a common Right and Title to Happiness, which cannot be obtain'd without Society, nor Society subsist without mutual Aids of Love and Friendship, because we are not self-sufficient, but stand in need of mutual assistances; from hence it follows, That as every man is obliged to act for his own Good, so also to aim at the Common Good of Mankind, because without this the Natural Right that every individual man has to Happiness cannot possibly be obtain'd; so that there will plainly arise from the Constitution of Humane Nature an Essential Justice, that demands of every man Offices of Love and Kindness to others as well as to himself; in that without this that Common Welfare and Happiness, which Nature, or rather that Divine Providence that made it, design'd for all and every Individual of Mankind, must become utterly unattainable. And hence the sole Fountain of all the Mischiefs and Miseries in the World is excess of unreasonable Self-love, and neglect of all other Interests

Interests but our own ; and all such, as separate their own Concerns from the Common Interest, are the profest Enemies of Mankind : And therefore 'tis the only aim of all the Just Laws and Wise Philosophy in the World, to assign reasonable allowances between Self-love and Society. And if all men would be Just, and Impartial between themselves and the Publick, *i. e.* all others, there would be no use of Laws nor Judges, this being the only Office of Publick Justice, to balance every man's private Interest.

Well then, because there is an absolute Necessity that the Government of the World must be suited to, and established upon the natural Condition of Humane Nature ; hence it is, that it is made as Natural to the Being, as 'tis Necessary to the Preservation of Mankind ; and that as we cannot subsist, so neither can we be born out of Society, he that made us, having made this our Natural Condition, that we could not possibly come into the World but under a State of Government, all Children being actually as soon as born under the Power and Authority of their Parents : and therefore

as

as Mankind cannot continue without Propagation, so neither can Propagation without Government; and to be a Subject is as natural upon being born, as to be a Man. Now 'tis certain, that that only can be accounted the State of Nature that was made and design'd by the Author of Nature (for if it be not suitable to that Order and Condition of things, that he has establish'd, 'tis preternatural.) And therefore seeing he did not create Multitudes of men together out of each others Power, and in a State of War and Hostility, but begun the Race of Humane Kind in a Single Person, by whom the Community of Men was to be Propagated, that must be the State of Nature in which it was at first founded, and by which it is still continued: But if men will feign such an imaginary State of Nature as is utterly contradictory to the Real, and then, upon such an unnatural Frame of Affairs, establish our natural Rights; 'tis no wonder if they prove contrary to our Common Interests, seeing they are suited to a contrary State of things.

¶ 4. No man can seriously embrace
this

this Hypothesis, that does not firmly believe either (1.) That there never was any Author of Humane Nature, but that a Multitude of Men hapned by chance to arise like Mushromes out of the Earth altogether, who out of Diffidence and Jealousie one of another for want of acquaintance shun'd Society, and withdrew like all other Beasts of Prey into Dens and secret Retirements, where they lived poor and solitary as Bats and Owls, and subsisted like Vermine by robbing and filching from one another ; till finding this way of living lamentably unsafe and uneasy, every man being alwaies upon the guard against every man, and in continual fear and danger from the whole Community, they grew weary of this forlorn and comfortless way of living ; and thence some that were more wise, or more cowardly than others, when they chanced to meet in their wild rangings after Prey, instead of belabouring one another with Snagsticks, and beating out each others brains, made signs of Parley, and so began to treat of Terms of mutual Peace and Assistance, and so by degrees to win others into their Party, till they hearded
together

together into small Rendezvouzes, like the little Common-wealth of the Savage *Americans*, which in Process of time grew up into larger Societies, from whence at length came the different Nations and Governments of the World. But if this fortuitous Original of Humane Nature be too absurd and ridiculous to be asserted, then (2.) It must be supposed, that there was a First Author and Creator of Mankind: and if there were, then whoever believes this Hypothesis, must withal believe that he contrived things so ill, that unless his Creatures had by chance been more Provident than himself, they must of Necessity have perish'd as soon as they were made; and therefore that the Well-being of the World is to be entirely attributed to Mans Wit, and not to Gods Providence, who sent his Creatures into it in such a Condition as should oblige them to seek their own mutual Ruine and Destruction; so that had they continued in that state of War he left them in, they must have lived and died like Gladiators, and have unavoidably perish'd at one time or other by one anothers Swords; and therefore that Mankind owe the comfort of their
lives

Lives not at all to their Creator, but entirely to themselves; forasmuch as the very Laws of Nature, whereby, according to this Hypothesis, the World is preserved, were not establish'd by the Divine Providence; but are only so many Rules of Art, being, as all other Maximes of Prudence and Policy are, Inventions of Humane Wit, and suppose Man not in the Natural State and Posture of War, in which God left him, but in a preternatural one of his own Contriving. But certainly the Deity that made us, if we suppose him Good, made us not to be miserable; for so we must unavoidably have been in a perpetual State of War: and therefore to suppose he both made and left us in that Condition, is directly to deny our Creators Goodness. And then if we suppose him Wise, we cannot imagine he would frame a Creation to destroy it self; unless we can believe his only Design was to sport himself in the folly and madness of his Creatures, by beholding them by all the waies of Force and Fraud to conspire their own mutual Destruction, and therefore if the Creation of Man were a Product of the Divine Wisdom

Wisdom or Goodness, his natural State must have been a condition of Peace, and not such a State of War that should naturally tend to his Misery, Ruine, and utter Destruction.

§ 5. (3.) This Hypothesis irrecoverably destroys the Safety of all Societies of Mankind in the World : for if Personal Safety and Private Interest be the only Foundation of all the Laws of Nature or Principles of Equity, *i. e.* If men endeavour Peace, and enter into Contracts of mutual Trust, if they invade not the Proprieties of others, if they think themselves obliged to promote the Good of the Society, if they submit themselves to the Laws of the Commonwealth, if they practice Justice, Equity, Mercy, and all other Vertues, if they refrain from Cruelty, Pride, Revenge, and all other Vices, only to secure their own Personal Safety and Interest ; then when ever this Obligation ceases, all the Ties to Justice and Equity, that derive all their Force and Reason from it, must also cease ; and when any Single Person can hope to advance his own Private Interest by the Ruine of the
Publick

lick, it will be lawful for him to effect it ; and War, Rebellion, and Injuries will be at least as innocent as Faith, Justice, and Obedience : because these are good only in order to Private Interest, and therefore when those chance to be as conducive to it, they will then be as Just and Lawful. So that this single Principle does as effectually work the Subversion of all Government, as if men were taught the most professed Principles of Rebellion, as, that all Government is Tyranny and Usurpation ; that his Majesties possession of the Crown is his best Title ; that whoever has wit or strength enough to wrest his Scepter from him, has right to hold it. For as men of these and the like Perswasions will never act them, but when Opportunity invites ; and will be obedient to any Government, till they can destroy it : So will those other rebel, as soon as they think it their Interest. For when ever they can hope to mend their Fortunes by Rebellion, the same Obligation, that restrain'd them from it, does now as forcibly invite them to it, that is Self-interest : *i. e.* they cannot but think Rebellion lawful, as oft as they think it safe. And there are no Villains

so mad or foolish as to attempt it upon other grounds. So that, though this Author has assign'd us some not unuseful Laws of Nature, yet has he effectually enervated their force and usefulness, by resolving the Reason of their Obligation into Self-interest ; and so laying the Fundamental Principle of all Injustice, as the only foundation of all the Rules of Justice : For as 'tis the Nature and Office of Justice to maintain the Common Right of all, and to secure my Neighbours happiness as well as my own ; so the formal Obliquity of all Injustice lies in pursuing of a Private Interest without regard to the Common good of all and every Member of the Society. And therefore if Private Interest, be the only Reason and Enforcement of the Laws of Nature, men will have no other Motive to obey their Constitutions, than what will as strongly oblige to break them ; *i. e.* if men are just and honest for no other Reason than because 'tis their Interest, then when 'tis their Interest, they may (and if they are wise will) be unjust and dishonest. And so men that own the Laws of Nature, upon this Principle may be Villains, in spite of all their Restraints ;
and

and the most lewd and profligate Wretches will, as well as they, be just or unjust, as it serves their Turns. For this Principle, that engages men to be honest only as long as they must, will as effectually oblige them to be Rogues as soon as they can.

¶ 6. So that, according to this Hypothesis, Mankind is left in as ill a Condition after they have by Pacts and Covenants united into Societies, and a State of Peace, as they were in their natural State of War. For all Covenants of mutual Trust are (according to its own Rules) in the State of Nature invalid; because under that men are under no Obligations of Justice and Honesty to one another, and have no other measure of their Actions but their Interest; and therefore as that might invite them in some Circumstances to enter into Bonds and Contracts, so it may in others to break them. So that in the State of Government all their Promises, Oaths, and Contracts will prove as ineffectual as in the State of Nature: Partly, because the force of all Contracts, made in the State of Government, ariseth from the Validity of the

first Compact, that was made in the State of Nature ; that is, in that State in which it could have no Validity ; partly, Because they have no other Tye but that of Self-interest, and so can lay no other Obligation upon us to observe them, than they might have done before. And therefore if Mankind be once supposed in this natural State of War, they can never be delivered from it ; and after they have enter'd into Covenants of Peace, they would remain as much as before in a Posture of War, and be subject to all the same dangers and miseries, that would have annoyed them if they had continued in their Natural State. For if Justice and Fidelity be not supposed to be the Law and Duty of our Natures, no Covenants are of Power enough to bring us under any Obligation to them.

Now, having thus clearly blown up the Foundations of this Hypothesis, 'twere but Labour in vain to make particular enquiries into all the flaws and Follies of its Superstructures, seeing they must of Necessity stand and fall together ; for if its subsequent Propositions be coherently deduced from these Fundamental Principles

Principles, all the evidence and certainty they can pretend to, depends on them; and therefore the Premisses being once convicted of Falshood, all pretenses to Truth in the Conclusions must necessarily vanish. And if any of them happen to be true and rational, 'tis not by vertue of these, but other Principles. Thus though the Laws of Nature, he assigns, may be useful to the Ends of Government and Happiness of Mankind; yet, because upon those Grounds, on which he assigns them, they would be no Laws, that alone is sufficient Evidence of the Errour and Vanity of his whole Hypothesis; seeing how good soever they may be in themselves, yet upon the Principles, and in the Method, in which he proposes them they are of no Force. In that Self-interest being the only Reason of their Obligation, the Interests of Civil Society come thereby to be no better secured with, than without them: because if they were not in force by vertue of any Compact, all men would chuse to act according to them, when they thought it advantageous; and when they have the utmost force his Principles can give them, no man would think they

obliged him, when ever he apprehended them disadvantageous. So that this Malignant Principle of meer Self-interest running through the whole Systeme, and twisting it felt with every branch of his Morality, it does not only eat out, and enervate its native Life and Vigour, but withal envenoms their natural Truth and soundness with its own Malignity. Which Principle being removed, and that influence it hath on other parts of this Hypothesis being prevented, and withal the Foundation on which it stands ruin'd, *viz.* his Absurd and Imaginary State of Nature, we have perhaps cashier'd all that is either base or peculiar in it, and restored the true accounts of Natural Justice and Right Reason, *viz.* That all men have a natural Right to Happiness from the very design of their Creation, that this cannot be acquired without mutual Aids and Friendships ; and therefore right Reason Dictates, that every man should have some Concern for his Neighbour, as well as himself : because this is made necessary to the Welfare of the World by the Natural State of things, and by this mutual exchange of Love and kindness men support one another in the Comforts of Humane Life,

CHAP. V.

A Confutation of the Consequences that some men draw from Mr. Hobs's Principles in behalf of Liberty of Conscience.

The Contents.

HOW a belief of the Imposture of all Religions is become the most powerful and fashionable Argument for the Toleration of all. Though Religion were a Cheat, yet because the World cannot be govern'd without it, they are the most mischievous Enemies to Government that tell the World it is so. Religion is usefule or dangerous in a State, as the temper of mind it breeds is peaceable or or turbulent. The dread of Invisible Powers is not of it self sufficient to awe

People into Subjection, but tends more probably to Tumults and Seditions. This largely proved by the ungovernableness of the Principles and Tempers of some Sects. Fanaticism is as natural to the Common People, as Folly and Ignorance; and yet is more mischievous to Government, than Vice and Debauchery. How the Fanaticks of all Nations and Religions agree in the same Principles of Sedition. To permit different Sects of Religion in a Common-wealth is only, to keep up so many incurable Pretenses and Occasions of Publick Disturbance. The Corrupt Passions and Humours of Men make Toleration infinitely unsafe. Toleration only cried up by oppressed Parties, because it gives them Opportunity to overturn the Setled frame of Things. Every man that desires Indulgence is engaged by his Principles to endeavour Changes and Alterations. A bare Indulgence of men in any Religion, different from the establish'd way of worship, does but exasperate them against the State.

¶ 1.



And now the Reason, why I have thus far pursued this Principle, is, because 'tis become the most powerful Patron of the Fanatick Interest ; and a Belief of the Indifferency, or rather Imposture of all Religion, is now made the most Effectual (not to say most Fashionable) Argument for Liberty of Conscience. For when Men have once swallowed this Principle, That Mankind is free from all Obligations antecedent to the Laws of the Commonwealth, and that the Will of the Sovereign Power is the only measure of Good and Evil ; they proceed sutablely to their Principles, to believe, That no Religion can obtain the force of a Law, till 'tis establish'd for such by Supreme Authority ; that the Holy Scriptures were not Laws to any man, till they were enjoyn'd by the Christian Magistrate ; that no man is under any Obligation to assent to their Truth, unless the Governours of the Commonwealth require it ; and that setting aside their Commands, 'tis no sin to believe our blessed Saviour a villanous and lewd Impostor ; and that,

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if the Sovereign Power would declare the *Alcoran* to be Canonical Scripture, it would be as much the Word of God as the four Gospels. *Leviath. p.3.c.33. For if Sovereigns in their own Dominions are the sole Legislators, then those Books only are Canonical, that is Law, in every Nation, which are establis'd for such by the Sovereign Authority.* So that all Religions are in reality nothing but Cheats and Impostures, and at best but so many Tales of Imaginary and Invisible Powers, Publickly allowed and encouraged, to awe the Common People to Obedience. *Leviath. p.1.c.12. who are betrayed into it by these four Follies, A false Opinion of Ghosts and immaterial Substances, that neither are, nor ever can be; Ignorance of Second Causes; Devotion towards what men groundlessly fear; And mistaking things Casual for Divine Prognosticks.* In brief, all Religion is nothing but a Cheat of Policy, and was at first invented by the Founders and Legislators of Common-wealths, and by them obtruded upon the credulous Rabble for the Ends of Government. And therefore, though Princes may wisely make use of the Fables of Religion to serve their own turns
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upon the silly Multitude, yet 'tis below their Wisdom to be seriously concern'd themselves for such Fooleries ; so that, provided their Subjects will befool themselves with any one Imposture, 'tis not material which they single out ; in that all Religions equally oblige to the belief of Invisible Powers, which is all that is requisite to the Designs of Policy. And as long as a Prince can keep up any apprehensions of Religion in the minds of his Subjects, 'tis no Policy to disoblige and exasperate any of them, by interesting his Power for one Party more than another, and by forcing all other Sects against their own Inclinations to conform their Belief to the Perswasions of one Faction ; but rather to endear them all to himself, by Indulging them their Liberty in their different Follies : and so he may with more ease secure his Government by abusing all, and yet disobliging none.

¶ 2. In answer to this Objection, 'tis not material to my present Purpose largely to examine and refute these Wild and extravagant Pretenses, by asserting the Truth and Divine Authority of Religion,

Religion, and giving a Rational Account of the Grounds and Principles, on which it stands: only let me observe that this Discourse lies under no less Prejudice than this, that If any of the Principles of Religion be true, then is all these mens Policy false: but waving this too great advantage, I shall content my self only to discover of what noisome and pernicious consequence such Principles are to the Common-wealth, though it were granted that all Religion were nothing but Imposture. And this I shall do without reminding the Reader how I have already prevented this Objection in the first Part of the Discourse, when I shew'd what good or bad Influence upon the State mens Perswasions about Religion have, by these four ensuing Considerations.

First, Then me thinks his Majesty is bound to con these men thanks for endeavouring to render the Truth of Religion suspected, and to possess mens minds with apprehensions of its being False; whereby they effectually rob him of the best security of his Crown, and strongest inducement of Obedience to his Laws. There being for certain nothing so absolutely

absolutely necessary to the Reverence of Government, the Peace of Societies, and Common Interests of Mankind, as a sense of Conscience and Religion: This is the strongest Bond of Laws, and only support of Government; without it the most absolute and unlimited Powers in the World must be for ever miserably weak and precarious, and lie alwaies at the mercy of every Subjects Passion and Private Interest. For when the Obligations of Conscience and Religion are Cashier'd, men can have no higher Inducements to Loyalty and Obedience, than the Considerations of their own Private interest and Security; and then wherever these happen to fail, and Interest and Advantage invite to Disobedience, men may do as they please: and when they have Power to shake off Authority, they have Right too; and a prosperous Usurper shall have as fair a Title to his Crown as the most lawful Prince; all Government will be founded upon Force and Violence, and Kings nothing but terrible men with long Swords. But when the Ties of Conscience are superinduced upon those of Secular Interest, this extends the Power of Princes to the
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Hearts of their Subjects, and secures them as much from the very Thoughts, as Attempts of Treason. For nothing so strongly influences the Minds of men, or so Authoritatively commands their Passions and Inclinations as Religion; forasmuch as no fears are (not only to the considerate part of Mankind, but to the ruder sort) so vehement as those of Hell, nor hopes so active as those of Heaven: and therefore the Commands of Religion being back'd with such mighty Sanctions, they must needs have infinitely more force to Awe or Allure the minds of men to a compliance, than any Secular Interests. Whereas those men that think themselves above the Follies of Conscience, and either believe or regard not the Evils threatned hereafter (an Attainment to which these our Modern Politicians do not blush to pretend, though it be but an odd piece of Policy openly to own and proclaim it) must make their present Interest the Rule and measure of all their Actions; and can have no other Obligation to obey their Lawful Superiours, in what they command, than they have to disobey them, *viz.* their own Security and Self-preservation. Whereas

if these men lived under the Restraints of Conscience, and the serious Apprehensions of Religion, and believed the Laws of their Prince to be bound upon them by the Laws of God, and that under the threatnings of Everlasting misery ; their Loyalty would be tied upon them by all that men can either hope or fear, and they would have all the Engagements to Obedience that the serious reflections upon a Happy or Miserable Eternity could lay upon them. But if the Principles of Government have so Essential a dependence upon those of Religion, if nothing be powerful enough to secure Obedience but the hopes and fears of another Life, if all Humane Laws have their main force and efficacy from the Apprehensions of Religion, if Oaths, Promises, and Covenants, and whatsoever else whereby Civil Societies are upheld, are made firm by nothing but the Bonds of Religion ; then let Authority judge, how much it is beholden to those men, who labour to bring it into Publick disreputation, and to possess their Subjects with an Opinion of its falshood : whereby they not only set them loose from their Authority, but

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enrage them against it, by perswading them they are governed by Cheats and Impostures, and that the Magistrate builds his Dominion upon their Folly and Simplicity, there being nothing more hateful to Mankind than to be imposed upon : So that though Religion were a Cheat, they are apparently the greatest Enemies to Government, that tell the World it is so.

§ 3. But secondly, Nothing more concerns the Interest of the Civil Magistrate, than to take care, what particular Doctrines of Religion are taught within his Dominions ; because some are peculiarly advantageous to the Ends of Government, and others as naturally tending to its disturbance : Some encline the minds of Men to Candour, Moderation, and Ingenuity, and work them to a gentle and peaceable Temper, by teaching Humility, Charity, Meekness, and Obedience : Now 'tis the Interest of Princes to cherish and propagate such Doctrines among their Subjects, that will make them not only quiet, but useful in the Common-wealth. But others there are that infect the minds of men
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with Pride, Peevishness, Malice, Spight, and Envy; that encline them to delight in detracting from Princes, and speaking reproachfully of Government, and breed in them such restless and Seditious Tempers, that 'tis next to an Impossibility for any Prince to please or oblige them. Now, as for such Perverse and Arrogant Sects of Men, it certainly concerns Governours to suppress them as so many Routs of Traytors and Rebels.

Religion then is either useful or dangerous in a Common-wealth, as the temper of mind it breeds is Peaceable or Turbulent: and as there is nothing more serviceable to the Interests of Government, so there is nothing more mischievous: and therefore nothing more concerns Princes, than to take care what Doctrines are taught within their Dominions. For seeing Religion has, and will have the strongest Influence upon the minds of men; when that renders them Averse and Troublesome to Government, 'tis not all the Power nor Policy in the World can keep them Peaceable, till such Perswasions are rooted out of their minds by Severity of Laws and Penalties. And, as long as men think

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themselves obliged, upon pain of Damnation, to Disobedience and Sedition, not any Secular Threatnings and Inflictions are of force enough to bridle the Exorbitances of Conscience. There is not any Vice so incident to the Common People as Superstition, nor any so Mischievous. 'Tis infinitely evident from the Histories and Records of all Ages and Nations, that there is nothing so Vicious or Absurd but may pass for Religion, and (what is worse) the more Wild and Giddy Conceits of Religion are ever suckt in by the multitude with the greatest Passion and Eagerness; and there is no one thing in the World so difficult, as to bring the Common People to true Notions of God and his Worship: insomuch that 'tis no Paradox to affirm, That what is mistaken for Religion, has been one of the greatest Principles of Mischief and Wickedness in the World. And if so, then certainly nothing requires so much Care and Prudence in the Civil Magistrate, as its due conduct and management. So that the dread of Invisible Powers is of it self no more serviceable to awe the People into Subjection, than to drive them
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into Tumults and Confusions ; and if it chance to be accompanied (as it easily may) with Tumultuary and Seditious Perswasions, 'tis an invincible Obligation to Villany and Rebellion. And therefore it must needs above all things concern Princes, to look to the Doctrines and Articles of mens belief ; seeing 'tis so great odds that they prove of dangerous Consequence to the Publick Peace : and in that case, the Apprehensions of a Deity, and a World to come, makes their danger almost irresistible.

¶ 4. There are some Sects whose Principles, and some Persons whose Tempers will not suffer them to live peaceably in any Common-wealth. For what if some men believe, That if Princes refuse to reform Religion themselves, 'tis lawful for their Godly Subjects to do it, and that by Violence and force of Arms ? What if they believe, That Princes are but Executioners of the Decrees of the Presbytery ; and that in case of Disobedience to their Spiritual Governours, they may be Excommunicated, and by consequence Deposed ? What if they believe, That Dominion

is founded in Grace; and therefore that all wicked Kings forfeit their Crowns, and that it is in the Power of the People of God to bestow them where they please? And what if others believe, That to pursue their Success in Villany and Rebellion is to follow Providence; and that when the Event of War has deliver'd up Kings into their Power, then not to depose or murther them, were to slight the Guidance of Gods Providential Dispensations? Are not these, and the like Innocent Propositions (think you) mightily conducive to the peace and settlement of Common-wealths? Such Articles of Faith as these cannot but make brave and obedient Subjects, and he must needs be a glorious and powerful Prince, where such Conceits are the main Ingredients of his Subjects Religion. Let any man shew me, what Doctrines could have been more unluckily contrived to disturbe Government than these. And if men would study on purpose to frame and model a Rebellious Faith, these must have been their Fundamental Articles: and yet 'tis sufficiently known where they have been both believed and practised. But further,

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Is there not a sort of Melancholy Religionists in the World, whose very Genius enclines them to Quarrels and Exceptions against the State, and management of Publick Affairs? There is nothing so malepert as a Splenetick Religion; the inward discontent and uneasiness of mens own minds maintains it self upon the Faults and Miscarriages of others: and we may observe, how this Humour is ever venting it self in Sighs and Complaints for the Badness of the Times (*i. e.* in effect of the Government) and in telling and aggravating little Stories, that may reflect upon the Wisdom and Ability of their Superiours. 'Tis impossible to please their fretful and anxious Minds; the very Delights and Recreations of the Court shall stir their Envy, and the Vanities of the Great Ones grieve and wound their tender Souls. However Princes behave themselves, they can never win upon the Affections of these People; their very Prosperity shall disoblige them, and they are ready upon all occasions to bring them to Account for their Misdemeanours: And if any of the Grandees happen to be discontented, they have here a Party ready formed for the

purpose, to revenge their Injury, and bring evil Counsellors, that seduce the King, to Justice. And 'tis not impossible but there may be a sort of Proud and Haughty men among us (not over-well affected to Monarchick Government) who, though they scorn, yet patronize this Humour, as a check to the Insolence and Presumption of Princes. Again, Are there not some whole Sects of men, all whose Religion is made up of nothing but Passion, Rancour, and Bitterness? All whose Devotion is little better than a Male-contentedness, their Piety than a sanctified Fury, and their Zeal than a proud and spiteful Malice; and who, by the Genius of their Principles, are brought infinitely and irrecoverably under the Power of their Passions; *Τὸς γὰρ Περσῶν τὸν πόλεμον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνὴρ ἐκείνου.* Now, nothing imports Governours so much as to manage mens Passions; in that 'tis these, rather than our Appetites, that disturb the World. A Person that is Debaucht and Intemperate is indeed useless to the Common-wealth, but he that is Turbulent and Passionate is dangerous. But then when Passion is fired with Religious Zeal, nothing can temper
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its Outragious and Fanatick heats ; but it works the minds of men into Rancour and Bitterness, and drives them into all manner of Savage and Inhumane Practises. Princes have never found any thing so restive and ungovernable, as Sectarian Madness ; no Malice so spiteful and implacable, as the Zeal of a Godly Party ; nor any rage so fierce and merciless, as sanctified Barbarism. All the Antient Tyranny has in some places been outdone by a thorough-godly-Reformation: Zeal for the Glory of God has often turn'd whole Nations into Shambles, fill'd the World with continual Butcheries and Massacres, and flesh'd it self with the slaughters of Myriads of Mankind. And when men think their Passions warranted by their Religion, how is it possible it should be otherwise ? For this obliges them by their greatest hopes and fears to Act them to the highest : and 'tis easie to imagine what calm and peaceable things those men must be, who think it their duty, to enforce and enrage their Passions with the Obligations of Conscience. And yet alas ! How few are they, who have Wisdom enough to keep their Zeal clean from these sower

and crabbed mixtures? The generality of men are scarce sensible of their spiritual Wickednesses; and 'tis observable, That in all Ages, and all Religions of the World, few People have taken notice of them beside their Wise men and Philosophers. And even among the Professors of Christianity it self, notwithstanding that our Religion has made such special Provisions against all Excesses of Passion, and establish'd Love, Charity, Moderation, Patience, Candor, and Ingenuity, as its Prime, and Fundamental Duties; yet this Spirit of Meekness and Humility soon decayed, with its Primitive and Apostolical Professours; and within a few Centuries of Years the Church was over-run with some Sects of men, much of the same Temper with some of our Modern Saints. So that even in true and innocent Perswasions 'tis necessary to assuage the distempers and indiscretions of a forward Zeal: The Giddy Multitude judge Weakely, fancy Strongly, and act Passionately; and, unless restrain'd by wary and sober Laws, will drive on so furiously in a good Cause, till they run their Religion into Folly and Faction, and themselves into Tumults
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and Riotous proceedings. What *Socrates* once said of Vertue, That when it is not conducted by Prudence, it is but Pedantry, and a Phantastick thing, is much more true of Religion; which, when it wants the Guidance and Ornament of this Vertue, may be Folly, or Madnesse, or any thing rather than Religion. In brief, Fanaticism is both the greatest, and the easiest Vice that is incident to Religion; 'tis a Weed that thrives in all Soils, and there is the same Fanatick Spirit, that mixes it self with all the Religions in the World. And 'tis as natural to the Common People, as to be Proud, or Ignorant, or Perverse, or Factionous, or Stubborn, or Eager, or Passionate: for when ever any of these Vices or Follies are twisted with mens Apprehensions of Religion, they naturally work, and ferment their minds into a Boysterous and Tumultuary Zeal. And yet how infinitely difficult it is to cure the Common Herd of these Vices, the Experience of all Ages is too great a Demonstration: so that there is nothing so apparently necessary, or difficult, as to govern the Vulgar Rout in their Conceptions of Religion; seeing 'tis so natural for them both to mix and
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heighten, yes, and sanctifie their Passions with their Consciences. And from hence it is, that though the Fanaticks in all Nations may disagree, in the Objects and Matters of their Superstition, according to the different Customs of their Country, and variety of their Educations ; yet as for their tendency to Disturbance and Sedition in the State, 'tis in all places the same to all intents and purposes : And those unquiet Sects, that have often disturb'd, and sometimes subverted whole Kingdoms in *Africa*, if they had hapned to have been born in *Europe*, would have done the same here ; where though their Religion might have been different, yet would their Genius have been the same, as arising from the same conjunction of Conscience and Passion. And therefore it cannot but be a wonder to any man, that is acquainted with the Experience of former Ages, to see Governours, after so many warnings, so insensible of this Mischiefe : and however they may think themselves unconcern'd to restrain the Opinions of any dissenting Sect, as being perhaps but foolish and inconsiderable in themselves ; yet nothing can more highly concern them than to provide

provide against their Inclinations, as being generally of a sad and dangerous Consequence to the State. And this at present may suffice to evince, How much it concerns Authority to look to the particular Principles and Inclinations of every Sect; and to prove, That the meer belief of Invisible Power, is so far from being Religion enough to awe men to Obedience; that unless it be temper'd with a due sense of Vertue, and managed with special Prudence and Discretion, it rather tends to make the Rude Multitude more Headstrong and Ungovernable.

§ 5. Thirdly, To permit different Sects of Religion in a Common-wealth, is only to keep up so many pretences and occasions for Publick Disturbance; the Factions of Religion are ever the most Seditious, and the less material their Difference, the more implacable their Hatred: as the Turks think it more acceptable to God, to kill one Persian than seventy Christians. Nothing so vehemently alienates mens Affections, as variety of Judgment in matters of Religion; here they cannot disagree, but they must quarrel

quarrel too : and when Religion divides Mens Minds, no other Common Interest can unite them ; and where Zeal dissolves Friendship, the Ties of Nature are not strong enough to reconcile it. Every Faction is at open defiance with every Faction, they are alwaies in a State and Posture of War, and engaged in a mortal and irreconcilable hatred against each other. When ever men part Communion, every Party must of necessity esteem the other Impious and Heretical ; in that they never divide but with Pretenses, that they could not agree without being guilty of some Sin or other, as Blasphemy, or Idolatry, or Superstition, or Heresie, or the like : For all agree in this Principle, That Peace ought alwaies to be preserved, where it can without offending God, and offering Violence to Conscience : and therefore they cannot but look upon one another, as lying under the Divine Wrath and Displeasure, and consequently, in a damnable Condition : and then are both Parties engaged, as they love God, and the Souls of men, to labour one anothers Ruine. And when the Party is form'd, and men are listed into it by Chance and Education,

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the distinguishing Opinion of the Party is to them the most material and fundamental Article of their Belief; and so they must account of all that either disown or deny it as of Heathens, Infidels, and Enemies to the Faith. Besides that, all men are naturally more zealous about the Principles in which they differ, than about those in which they agree. Opposition whets and sharpens their Zeal, because it endangers the truths they contend for; whereas those that are not opposed are secure and out of hazard of being stifled by the adverse Party, that is concern'd equally with themselves for their Preservation. And hence we see, by dayly Experience, that men, who are tame and cool enough in the Fundamentals of Religion, are yet utterly impatient about their own unlearned and impertinent Wranglings, and lay a greater stress upon the Speculations of their own Sect, than upon the Duties of an absolute and indispensable Necessity; only because those are contradicted by their Adversaries, and these are not. Well then, seeing all Dissenting Parties are possess'd with a furious and passionate Zeal to promote their own Perswasions, and seeing they

they are perswaded that their Zeal is in God's Cause, and against the Enemies of God's Truths; How vain is it to expect Peace and Settlement in a Commonwealth, where their Religion keeps men in a State of War, where Zeal is arm'd against Zeal, and Conscience encounters Conscience, where the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls lies at Stake, and where *Curse ye Merox* is the Word of both Parties? So that whatsoever Projects fanfiful men may propose to themselves, if we consider the Passions of Humane Nature, as long as Differences and Competitions in Religion are kept up, it will be impossible to keep down mutual Hatreds, Jealousies, and Animosities; and so many divided Churches as there are in a State, there will ever be so many different Armies, who, though they are not alwaies in Actual Fighting, are alwaies in a Disposition to it.

Beside, where there are divided Interests of Religion in the same Kingdom, how shall the Prince behave himself towards them? If he go about to Balance them against one another, this is the ready way to forfeit his Interest in them all;
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and whilst he seems concern'd for no Party, no Party will be really concern'd for him, every one having so much esteem for it self, as to think it ought to enjoy more of his Favour and countenance than any other. And withal 'tis an infinite trouble and difficulty to poise them so equally, but that one Party shall grow more strong and numerous than the rest; and then there is no appeasing their Zeal, till it has destroyed and swallowed up all the weaker interests. But suppose he be able to manage them so prudently, as alwaies to keep the balance equal; he does thereby but keep up so many Parties, that are ready form'd to joyn with any emergent Quarrels of State: and when ever the Grandees fall out, 'tis but heading one of these, and there is an Army. And let men but reflect upon all the late Civil Wars, and Rebellions of Christendom, and then tell me, which way they could either have been commenced or continued, had it not been for different Factions of Religion.

If he side with one Party, and by his Favour mount it above the rest, that not only Discontents, but Combines all the other Dissenting Factions into an united
Opposition

Opposition against his own: and it becomes their Common Interest, to work and contrive its Ruine; its Prosperity does but exasperate the Competition of all its Rivals into Rage and Indignation: and as Success makes it self more secure in its Settlement, so it makes them more restless and industrious to overturn it. No Party can ever be quiet or content as long as 'tis under any other, but will ever be heaving and struggling, to dismount that Power that keeps it down: and therefore we find that all Dissenters from the establish'd frame of things are alwaies assaulting it with open Violence, or undermining it by secret Practices, and will hazard the State, and all, to free themselves from Oppression; and oppress'd they are, as long as they are the weaker Party. And therefore we never find this way of Toleration put in practice under any Government, but where other Exigences of State required and kept up a standing Army; and by this means 'tis not so difficult to prevent the Broils and Contentions of Zeal: but this is only a more violent way of Governing mens Consciences, and instead of restraining them by Laws and Penalties,

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it does the same thing with Forts and Citadels: So that unless we are willing to put our selves to the Expense and Hazard of keeping up standing Forces, Indulgence to dissenting Zealots does but expose the State to the perpetual Squabbles and Wars of Religion. And we may as well suppose all Men to be wise and honest, and upon that account cancel all the Laws of Justice and Civil Government, as imagine, where there are divided Factions in Religion, that Men will be Temperate and Peaceable in the Enjoyment of their own Conceits, and not disturb the Publick Peace to promote and establish Them; when 'tis so well known from the Experience of all Ages, That nothing has ever been a more effectual Engine to work Popular Com-motions, than Changes and Reformati-
ons in Religion.

§ 6. So that though the State think it self unconcern'd to restrain Mens Perswasions and Opinions, yet methinks they should be a little concern'd to prevent the Tumults and Disturbances that naturally arise from their Propagation. And could it be secured, That if all Men

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were indulged their Liberty, they would use it modestly, and be satisfied with their own Freedom, then (I confess) Toleration of all Opinions would not be of so fatal and dangerous Consequence; as if all Men were as wise and honest as *Socrates*, they might, as well as he, be their own Law, and left entirely to their own Liberty, as to all the Entercourses and Transactions of Humane Life. But alas! this is made infinitely impossible, from the corrupt Passions and Humors of Men: All Sects ever were, and ever will be, fierce and unruly to enlarge their own Interests, invading or supplanting whatever opposes their increase, and will all certainly conspire the Ruine of that Party that prevails and triumphs over the rest; every Faction ever apprehending it its due to be Supreme: and there will ever be a necessity of Reformation, as long as all Factions are not uppermost; and it will be crime enough in any one Party, to be superiour to another. So that if all our dissenting Sectaries were allowed their entire Liberty, nothing can be expected (especially from People of their Complexion) but that they should all plot together against the present Establishment

blishment of the Church ; every Combination being fully perswaded of its worthlesness in comparison to it self : for unless they had apprehended their own Way more excellent, they had never divided from ours. Beside that 'tis a Fundamental Principle that runs through all their Sects , That they are bound under pain of Eternal Damnation to labour their utmost to establish the Worship of God in its greatest Purity and Perfection ; and withal apprehending that Way now Establish'd by Law Defective and Superstitious, they cannot but be bound in Conscience to endeavour its utter Ruine and Subversion ; which Design when they have once compassed, they entertaining the same Opinion of each other as they do of us, they will turn their Weapons upon themselves , and with as much Zeal contrive each others Destruction as they did ours : and the result of all will be, That the Commonwealth will be eternally torn with Intestine Quarrels and Commotions, till it grow so wise again as to suppress all Parties but one ; that is, till it return to that Wisdom and Prudence from whence it parted by Toleration.

And therefore nothing can be more vulgarly observable, than that though all Parties, whilst under the Power of a more prevailing Interest, have cried up Toleration, as the most effectual Instrument to shake and disettle the present Frame of Things; yet they have no sooner effected their Design, than they have immediately put in to scramble for the Supremacy themselves; which if they once obtain, they have ever used with as much Rigour and Severity upon all Dissenters, as they ever felt themselves. So that this Principle of Liberty of Conscience much resembles that of Community of Goods: for as those Men cry up Equality of Estates, as a most reasonable piece of Justice, that have but a small share themselves; yet whenever their Pretense succeeds, and they have advanced their own Fortunes, and served their own turns, they are the first that shall then cry it down, and oppress their Inferiours with more cruelty than ever themselves felt whilst in a lower Station. And thus do those Men, whose Private Perswasions happen to cross the Publick Laws, easily pretend to Liberty of Conscience. One must yield; and because
 their

their stubborn Zeal scorns to bend to the Commands of Authority, these must be forced to give place to that: So that when Conscience and Authority happen to encounter, all the Dispute is, Which shall have most force in Publick Laws, whether my own or my Princes Opinion? But how plausibly soever this Notion may be pleaded by Men out of Power, 'tis ever laid aside as soon as ever they come into it; and the greatest Pretenders to it when oppress'd, are always the greatest Zealots against it, as soon as it has mounted themselves into Power, as well knowing it to be the most effectual Engine to overturn any settled Frame of Things.

In brief, 'Tis Reformation Men would have, and not Indulgence; which they only seek, to gain ground for the working of their Mines, and planting of their Engines, to subvert the Establish'd State of Things. For if we demand, Wherefore they would be born with in their Dissentions from our Way of Worship? They answer, Because they cannot Conform to it in Conscience, *i. e.* because they apprehend it sinful; for otherwise they must think themselves guilty of the

most intolerable Schism and Rebellion, to create Factions and Divisions in a Common-wealth, when they may avoid it without any violence to their Consciences: But if they apprehend our Way of Worship upon any account sinful, then are they plainly obliged in Conscience to root it out, as displeasing to Almighty God, and in its stead to plant and establish their own. And now if this be the Issue of this Principle, let Magistrates consider how fatal and hazardous Alterations in Religion have ever been to the Common-wealth. They cannot pluck a Pin out of the Church, but the State immediately shakes and totters; and if they will allow their Subjects the Liberty of changing and innovating in Religion (as it is apparent from the Premises they must, if they allow them their Pretences to Liberty of Conscience) they do but give them Advantages for Eternal Popular Commotions and Disturbances.

§ 7. Fourthly, A bare Indulgence of Men in the free Exercise of any Religion, different from the Publick Profession, can lay no obligation upon the Party. Perhaps when the rigour of a Law, under which

which they have smarted a while, is at first relaxed, this indeed they may at present take for a Kindness, because 'tis really a Favour in comparison to their former Condition; and therefore as long as the memory of that remains fresh upon their minds, it may possibly affect them with some grateful Resentments. But alas! these Affections quickly vanish, and then what before was Favour, is now become Justice; and their Prince did but restore them to their just and lawful Rights, when he took off his Tyrannical Laws and Impositions from the Consciences of his best Subjects. While those unjust Laws were in force, he oppress'd and persecuted the People of God; and therefore when he cancels them, all the Kindness he is guilty of, is only to repent of his Tyranny and Persecution, which is no Favour, and by consequence no Obligation. And (what is more considerable) all the dissenting Parties he permits, and does not countenance, he disoblige. Is this all the Kindness (say they) he can afford the Godly, not to persecute them by Law and Force, to their utter Ruine? Are we beholden to him barely for suffering us

to live in our Native Soil, and enjoy only our Fundamental Priviledges? Is this all the Reward and Encouragement we deserve? Are not we the praying and serious People of the Nation, for whose sakes only the Lord is pleased to stay among us? And were it not for us, would he not perfectly forsake and abandon it? And is this all our requital, to be thus slighted, and thus despised, only for our Zeal to God, and Serviceableness to the Publick, by that Power and Interest we have in him, to keep him among us; whilst vain and useles Persons are countenanced and encouraged with all Places of Office and Employment? These are the natural Results of the Minds of Men, who think themselves scorn'd and disrespected, especially when flush'd with any Conceit and high Opinion of their own Godliness. And 'tis an eternal Truth, *That for the Godly Party not to be uppermost, is and ever will be Persecution.* For nothing more certain, than that all Men entertain the best Opinion of their own Party, otherwise they had never enrolled themselves in it: and therefore if the State value them not at as high a rate as they do themselves, they are
scorn'd

scorn'd and injured, because they have not that Favour and Countenance they deserve. And so unless they have Publick Encouragement, as well as Indulgence, they have reason to be discontented, because they have not their due. And if the Prince do not espouse their Party, he undervalues, and consequently disgusts them; and if he joyn himself to any other (as there is a necessity of his owning some Profession) he does not only disoblige, but alienate their Affections, by embracing an Interest they both hate and scorn. For, where-ever there is difference of Religion, there is opposition too; because Men would never divide from one another, but upon grounds of real dislike; and therefore they are always contrary in those Differences that distinguish their Parties. And this cannot but be a mighty endearment of their Prince to them, when he neglects and discountenances his best Subjects, only because they are the Godly Party (for so every Party is to it self) to joyn himself to their profest and irreconcilable Enemies. And they will be wonderfully forward to assist a Patron of Idolatry and Superstition, or an Enemy
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to the Power of Godliness (for these are the softest words that different Sects can afford one another.) And withal I might add, That they must needs be much in love with him, when they have reason to believe, that they lie perpetually under his Displeasure, and that he looks upon them as little better than Enemies. So that if a Prince permit different Parties and Interests of Religion in his Dominions, however he carries himself towards them, he shall have at least all Parties discontented but one: for if himself be of any, he displeases all but that; if of none, he displeases all: And Zealous and Religious People of all sorts must needs be wonderfully in love with an Atheist; and there is no remedy, but he must at least be thought so, if he be not of any visible Profession.

CHAP. VI.

*Of Things Indifferent, and
of the Power of the Civil
Magistrate in Things
undetermined by the
Word of God.*

The Contents.

THe Mystery of Puritanism lies in this Assertion, That nothing ought to be Establish'd in the worship of God, but what is expressly commanded in the word of God. The wildness, Novelty, and unreasonableness of this Principle. It makes meer Obedience to Lawful Authority sinful. It takes away all possibility of Settlement in any Church or Nation. It is the main Pretense of all Pious Villanies. It cancels all Humane Laws, and makes most of the Divine Laws

Laws useleſs and impracticable. It obliges Men to be Seditious in all Churches in the World, in that there is no Church that has not ſome Cuſtoms and Uſages peculiar to it ſelf. All that pretend this Principle do and muſt act contrary to it. The Exorbitancy of this Principle makes all yielding and condeſcention to the Men that plead it unſafe and impolitick. wherein the Perfection and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures conſiſts. Of the Vanity of their Diſtinction, who tell us, That the Civil Magiſtrate is to ſee the Laws of Chriſt executed, but to make none of his own. The dangerous Conſequents of their way of arguing, who would prove, That God ought to have determined all Circumſtances of his own Worſhip. 'Tis ſcarce poſſible to determine all Circumſtances of any outward Action, they are ſo many and ſo various. The Magiſtrate has no way to make Men of this Perſwaſion comply with his Will, but by forbidding what he would have done. The Puritans upbraided with Mr. Hooker's Book of Eccleſiaſtical Politic, and challenged to answer it. Their Out-cries againſt Popery, will-worſhip,

worship, Superstition, Adding to the Law of God, &c. retorted upon themselves. The main Objection against the Magistrates Power in Religion proposed, viz. That 'tis possible that he may impose things Sinful and Superstitious. This Objection lies as strongly against all manner of Government. Our Inquiry is after the best way of settling things, not that possibly might be, but that really is. Though Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction may be abused, yet 'tis then less mischievous than Liberty of Conscience. The Reason of the Necessity of Subjection to the worst of Governours, because Tyranny is less mischievous than Rebellion or Anarchy. The Author of the Book entituled, *Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos*, confuted. That it may, and often does so happen, that 'tis necessary to punish Men for such Perswasions into which they have innocently abused themselves. Actions are punishable by Humane Laws, not for their Sinfulness, but for their ill Consequence to the Publick. This applied to the Case of a well-meaning Conscience.

¶ 1.



LL things, as well Sacred as Civil, that are not already determined as to their Morality; *i. e.* that are not made necessary Duties by being commanded, or sinful Actions by being forbidden either by the Law of Nature, or Positive Law of God, may be lawfully determined either way by the Supreme Authority; and the Conscience of every Subject is tied to yield Obedience to all such Determinations. This Assertion I lay down to oppose the first and the last and the great Pretense of Non-conformity, and wherein (as one observeth) the very Mystery of Puritanism consisteth, *viz.* That Nothing ought to be established in the Worship of God, but what is authorized by some Precept or Example in the Word of God; that is the complete and adequate Rule of Worship: and therefore, *Christian Magistrates are only to see that executed that Christ has appointed in Religion, but to bring in nothing of their own; they are tied up neither to add nor diminish, neither in the matter nor manner: So that whatever they injoy in Divine Worship,*

ship, if it be not expressly warranted by a Divine Command, how innocent soever it may be in it self, it presently upon that account loses not only its Liberty but its Lawfulness; it being as requisite to Christian Practice, that things Indifferent should still be kept Indifferent, as things Necessary be held Necessary. This very Principle is the only Fountain and Foundation of all Puritanism, from which it was at first derived, and into which it is at last resolved. A Pretense so strangely wild and humorfom, that it is to me an equal wonder, either that they should be so absurd as seriously to believe it; or, if they do not, that they should be so impudent, as thus long and thus confidently to pretend it, when it has not the least shadow of Foundation either from Reason or from Scripture; and was scarce ever so much as thought of, till some Men having made an unreasonable Separation from the Church of *England*, were forced to justify themselves by as unreasonable Pretenses. For, what can be more incredible, than that Things that were before Lawful and Innocent, should become Sinful upon no other score than their being commanded,

i. e.

i. e. that meer Obedience to Lawful Authority should make Innocent Actions Criminal? For the Matter of the Law is supposed of it self Indifferent; and therefore if Obedience to the Law be Unlawful, it can be so for no other reason than because 'tis Obedience. So that if Christian Liberty be so awkward a thing (as these Men make it) 'tis nothing else but Christian Rebellion, 'tis a Duty that binds Men to Disobedience, and forbids things under that formality, because Authority commands them. Now what a reproach to the Gospel is this, that it should be made the only Plea for Sedition? What a scandal to Religion, that tenderness of Conscience should be made the only Principle of Disobedience; and that nothing should so much incline Men to be refractory to Authority, as their being Conscientious? What a perverse folly is it to imagine, That nothing but opposition to Government can secure our Liberty? And what a cross-grain'd thing is it, to restrain things only because they are matters of Liberty; and first to forbid Princes to Command them because they are Lawful, and then Subjects to do them only because

because they are commanded. But to expose the Absurdity of this principle by some more particular Considerations.

§ 2. First, The Follies and Mischiefs that issue from it, are so infinite, that there can be no settled Frame of things in the World, that it will not overturn; and if it be admitted to all Intents and Purposes, there can never be an end of Disturbances, and Alterations in the Church; in that there never was, nor ever can be any Form of Worship in the World, that is to all Circumstances prescribed in the Word of God: and therefore if this Exception be thought sufficient to Destroy the one, there is no Remedy but it may, as occasion requires, serve as well to Cashire all; and by Consequence take away all possibility of Settlement. Thus when upon this Principle, the Disciplinarians Separated from the Church of *England*, the Independents upon the same ground Separated from them, the Anabaptists from the Independents, the Familists from the Anabaptists, and the Quakers from the Familists, and every Faction Divided, and Subdivided among themselves, into Innu-

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merable Sects, and Undersects : and as long as men act up to it , there is no Remedy, but Innovations must be Endless. If it be urged against Lord-Bishops, 'tis as severe against Lay-Presbyters ; if against Musick in Churches, then farewell Singing of Psalms in Rhime ; if against the Cross, why not against Sprinkling in Baptism ; and if against Cathedral Churches , then down go all Steeple-Houses : If against one thing , then against every thing ; and there is nothing in the Exteriour Parts of Religion , but the Two Sacraments , that can possibly escape its Impeachment. All the Pious Villanies, that have ever Disturbed the Christian World , have shelter'd themselves in this grand Maxime , That Jesus Christ is the only Law-maker to his Church ; and whoever takes upon himself to prescribe any thing in Religion, invades his Kingly Office. The *Gnosticks* of old so abused this Pretense to justify any Seditious and Licentious Practices , that they made Heathen Princes look upon Christianity as an Enemy to Government ; and the Fanaticks of late have so Vex'd and Embroil'd Christendom with the same Principle, that Christian Prin-

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ces themselves begin to be of the same Perswasion. 'Tis become the only Patron and Pretext of Sedition : and when any Subjects have a mind to set themselves free from the Laws of their Prince, they can never want this Pretense to warrant their Disobedience. Seeing there is no Nation in the World that has not divers Laws, that are not recorded by the four Evangelists ; and therefore if all Humane Institutions intrench upon our Saviours Kingly Prerogative, they are, and ever must be, provided with matters of Quarrel to Disturb Government, and Justifie Rebellion.

¶ 3. Secondly, Nay further this fond Pretense if made use of to all the ends, for which it might as wisely serve, would cancel all Humane Laws, and make most of the Divine Laws useless ; which have only described the General Lines of Duty, but left their particular determinations to the Wisdom of Humane Laws. Now the Laws of God cannot be put in practice, but in particular Cases and Circumstances, these cannot be determin'd but by the Laws of Man ; therefore if he can command nothing, but

what is already prescribed to us in the Word of God, he can have no Power to see the Divine Laws put in Execution. Where are described all the Rules of Justice and Honesty? Where are determined all Doubts and Questions of Conscience? Where are decided all Controversies of Right and Wrong? Where are Recorded all the Laws of Government and Policy? Why therefore should Humane Authority be allowed to interpose in these great Affairs, and yet be denied it in the Customs of Churches and Rules of Decency? There is no possible Reason to be assign'd but their own Humour and Fond Opinion, they are resolved to believe it, and that is Argument enough, for 'tis unanswerable. How comes this Proposition to be now limited to matters of Meer Religion, but only because this serves their turn; for otherwise, Why are not the Holy Scriptures as Perfect a Rule of Civil, as of Ecclesiastical Policy? Why should they not be as complete a System of Ethicks, as they are a Canon of Worship? Why do not these men require from the Scriptures express Commands for every Action they do in Common Life? How dare they take any
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Physick, but what is prescribed in the Word of God ? How dare they Commence a sute at Law, without Warranty from Scripture ? How dare they do any Natural Action, without Particular Advice and Direction of Holy Writ ?

§ 4. Thirdly, But as foolish as this Opinion is, its Mischief equals its Folly; for 'tis impossible but that these Sons of Strife and Singularity must have been Troublesome and Seditious in all Churches and Commonwealths. Had they lived under the Jewish Church, why then, Where has *Moses* Commanded the Feast of *Parim*, the Feast of the Dedication, the Fasts of the Fourth, the Fifth, the Seventh, and the Tenth Months ? What Warrant for the Building of Synagogues ? and what Command for that Significant Ceremony of Wearing Sackcloth and Ashes, in token of Humiliation ? If in the Primitive Ages of Christianity, why then, Where did our Saviour appoint the Love-Feasts ? Where has he instituted the Kiss of Charity ? Where has he Commanded the Observations of Lent, and Easter ? Where the Lords Day Sabbath ? and, Where all their other

Commemorative Festivals? *Vide Tertull. de Coronâ. c. 3.*

Will they retreat to the *Lutheran Churches*, they will there meet with not only all the same, but many more Antichristian and Superstitious Ceremonies to Offend their tender Consciences, and will find themselves Subject to the same Discipline and Government, saving that their Superintendents want the Antichristian Honours and Revenues of the English Bishops, partly through the Poverty of the Countrey, partly through the Injury of Sacrilege, but mainly because the Church Revenues are in the Possession of Romish Bishops. Will they to *France*, there, notwithstanding the unsettled State of the Protestants of that Nation, through want of the assistance of the Civil Power, they shall meet with their Liturgies, and establishd Forms of Prayer, and Change of Apparel for Divine Service, as well as at home? If they will to *Geneva*, there *Mr. Calvin's Common-Prayer-Book* is as much impos'd, as the Liturgy of the Church of *England*; there they are injoynd the use of Wafer-Cakes, the Custom of Godfathers, and Godmothers, bidding

bitlding of Prayer, Proper Psalms not only for Days, but for Hours of the Day, with divers other Rites and Ceremonies, that are no where Recorded in the Word of God. In a word, What Church in the World can affirm these were the only Customs of the Apostolical Age, and that the Primitive Church never used more or less than these? So that these men of Scruple, that renounce Communion with the Church of *England*, must do the same with all Churches in the World; in that there is not any one Church in Christendom, whose Laws and Customs are not apparently liable either to the same, or as great Exceptions. Now Magistrates must needs be oblig'd to deal wonderful gently with such tender Consciences as these, that are acted by such nice and unhappy Principles, as must force them to be Troublesome and unpeaceable in any Common-wealth in the World. Nay, what is more notorious than all this, these men have all along, in pursuit of this Principle, run directly counter to their own Practices and Perswasions. For, not to puzzle them to discover in which of the Gospels is injoyn'd the form of Publick Penance in the Kirk

of *Scotland*, or to find out the Stool of Repentance either among the Works of *Bazaleel*, or the Furniture of the Temple; We read indeed of Beesoms, and Flesh-forks, and Pots, and Shovels, and Candlesticks, but not one Syllable of Joynt-stools. Let them tell me, What Precept or Example they have in the Holy Scriptures for Singing Psalms in Meeter? Where has our Saviour or his Apottles injoyn'd a Directory for Publick Worship? And that which themselves imposed, What Divine Authority can it Challenge, beside that of an Ordinance of Lords and Commons? What Precept in the Word of God can they Produce for the Significant Form of Swearing (by laying their hand upon the Bible) which yet they never scrupled? What Scripture Command have they for the three Significant Ceremonies of the Solemn League and Covenant, viz. That the whole Congregation should take it (1.) Uncovered, (2.) Standing, (3.) with their Right Hand lift up Bare. Now, What a Prodigious Piece of Impudence was this, that when they had not only written so many Books with so much Vehemence against three Innocent Ceremonies

monies of the Church, only because they were Significant, but had also involved the Nation in a Civil War (in a great measure) for their Removal, and had arm'd themselves and their Party against their Sovereign with this Holy League of Rebellion, that even then they should impose three others, so Grossly and so Apparently lyable to all their own Objections? What clearer Evidence can we possibly have, That it is not Conscience, but Humours and Peevishness that Dictates their Scruples? And, What instance have we, in any Nation of the World, of any Schism and Faction so unreasonably begun and continued? The Rebellion of *Corah* indeed may resemble, but nothing can equal it.

And from hence we may discover, how vain a thing it is to make Proposals and Condescensions to such Unreasonable men, when 'tis so Impossible to satisfy all their Demands; and suppose we should yield and deliver up to their Zeal, those Harmless Ceremonies, they have so long Worried with so much Fury and Impatience; it would only Cherish them in their Restless and Ungovernable Perswasions: For whilst their peevish Tem-
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pers are acted by this exorbitant Principle, the Affairs of Religion can never be so settled, as to take away all Occasions and Pretences of Quarrel; in that there never can be any Circumstances of Religious Worship, against which this Principle may not as rationally be urged (and 'tis impossible to perform Religious Worship without some Circumstance or other :) and if all men make not use of it against all Particulars, 'tis because they are Humorsome as well as Seditious, and so allow one thing upon the same Principle they disavow another: For certainly otherwise it were impossible, that any men should, when they Pray, refuse to wear a Surplice; and yet when they Swear, (which is but another sort of Divine Worship) never Scruple to kiss the Gospel. So that whoever seriously imbibes this Perswasion, and upon that account withdraws himself from the Communion of the Church, he understands not the Consequences of his Opinion; if it does not lead him down to the lowest Folly of Quakerism, which after divers Gradual Exorbitances of other less Extravagant Sects, was but the last and utmost Improvement of this Principle.

ple. And therefore, whilst men are possess'd with such a Restless and Untoward Perswasion, What can be more apparently Vain, than to talk of Accommodations, or to hope for any possibility of Quiet and Settlement, till Authority shall see it necessary (as it will first or last) to scourge them into better Manners, and wiser Opinions? So that we see the weight of the Controversie lies not so much in the particular matters in Debate, as in the Principles upon which 'tis managed; and for this very Reason, though we are not so fond as to believe the Constitutions of the Church unalterable, yet we deem it apparently Absurd to forego any of her establish'd Ceremonies out of Compliance with these mens unreasonable Demands: which as it would be courselly impolitick upon divers other accounts, so mainly by yielding up her Laws, and by Consequence submitting her Authority to such Principles as must be Eternal and Invincible Hinderances of Peace and Settlement. This, let them consider whom it most concerns.

ø 5. Fourthly, As for their Principle
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of the Perfection and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, 'tis undeniably certain as to the Fundamental Truths, and Substantial Duties of Christian Religion ; but when this Rule, that is suited only to things necessary, is as confidently applied to things accessory, it lays in the minds of men impregnable Principles of Folly and Superstition : For confounding them in their different Apprehensions between the Substantial Duties , and External Circumstances of Religion ; and making them of equal Value and Necessity, it makes the doing, or not doing of a thing, necessary to procure the Divine Acceptance, which God himself has not made so ; and places a Religion in things that are not Religious, and possesseth the minds of men with false and groundless fears of God : wherein consisteth the very Essence and Formality of Superstition. Whereas were they duly instructed in the great Difference between things absolutely necessary, and things meerly decent, and circumstantial; this would not only preserve them in the right Notions of Good and Evil, but also keep up the Purity of Religion, Decency of Worship, and due Reverence of Authority.

rity. And therefore when these men would punctually tye up the Magistrate to add nothing to the Word of God, but what is injoynd in the Word of God, if their meaning be of new Articles of Belief, 'tis notoriously impertinent ; because to this no Civil Magistrate pretends : But if their meaning be, that the Magistrate has no Authority to determine the particular Circumstances of Religion, that are left undetermined by the Divine Law, 'tis then indeed to the purpose, but as notoriously False ; in that we are certainly bound to obey him in all things lawful, and every thing is so, that is not made unlawful by some prohibition ; for things become evil not upon the score of their being not commanded, but upon that of their being forbidden ; and what the Scripture forbids not, it allows ; and what it allows, is not unlawful ; and what is not unlawful, may lawfully be done : and therefore it must needs be our Duty to conform to all Circumstances of Worship, that are determined by lawful Authority, if they are not antecedently forbidden by the Law of God, though they are not commanded. Things that are not determined remain indifferent ;
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what is indifferent is lawful, and what is lawful the Magistrate may lawfully command; and if it be sinful to obey him in these things, 'tis so to obey him at all; for all things are either lawful or unlawful: 'tis a sin to obey him in things unlawful, and if it be so in things lawful too, then is all Obedience sinful.

¶ 6. Fifthly, When they tell us, That the Civil Magistrate is indeed to see to the Execution of the Laws of Christ, but to make none of his own: 'tis a Distinction without a Difference; for if he may provide for the Execution of the Laws of Religion, then may he make Laws that they shall be Executed; this being the most proper and effectual means to promote their Execution: so that nothing can be more vain than to deny the Civil Magistrate a Power of making Laws in Religion, and yet to allow him an Authority to see the Laws of Religion Executed; because that is so apparently implied in this, in that whoever has a Power to see that Laws be Executed, cannot be without a Power to Command their Execution: Especially if we consider the particular Nature of the Laws
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of Christ, that they have only determined the Substance and Morality of Religious Worship, and therefore must needs have left the ordering of its Circumstances to the Power and Wisdom of Lawful Authority ; and whatever they determine about them, is but in order to the Execution of the Laws of God ; in that whatever they injoyn cannot be put in practice, without being clothed with some particular Circumstances, and reduced to some particular Cases. Thus when the Holy Apostle sets us down a General Rule, that all things be done in Order and Decency, without determining what the things are that are conducive to it, the determination of this Rule when 'tis reduced to practice, must be entirely left to the Government of the Church, that must judge what things are Decent and Orderly ; and what Laws it establishes in order to it, though they are but further Pursuances of the Apostolical Precept, yet are they New and Distinct Commands by themselves, and injoyn something, that the Scripture no where Commands. So that the Divine Laws being General, and General Laws not being to be put in Execution, but in Particular Cases

Cases and Instances , he that has Authority to look to the Execution of these General Laws , must withal be vested with a Power to determine with what Particular Instances, Cases, and Circumstances they shall be put in Practice and Execution.

And here when they tell us, that it cannot stand with the Love and Wisdom of God , not to take Order himself for all things that immediately concern his own Worship and Kingdom ; and that if Jesus Christ has not determined all Particular Rites and Circumstances of Religion, he has discharged his Office with less Wisdom and Fidelity than *Moses* ; who ordered every thing appertaining to the Worship of God, even as far as the Pins and Nails of the Tabernacle, with divers others the like idle and impertinent Reasonings : One would think that men who argue at this rate, had already at least discovered in the Holy Scriptures a complete Form of Religious Worship, as to all Particular Rites and Ceremonies of an Eternal, Universal, and Unchangeable Obligation ; and therefore till they can believe this themselves, and prove it to others , instead of
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returning solemn Answers to such baffled and intolerable Impertinencies, I shall only advise them, to consider the unlucky Consequents of their way of Arguing, when instead of producing a Particular Form of Publick Worship, prescribed by God himself, they with their wonted Modesty prove he ought to have done it; and that unless he has done it, he has been defective in his Care and Providence over his Church: For what can the Issue of this be, but that God is chargeable with want of Wisdom, or Goodness, or with some other Defect, even by certain and infallible Experience? For, if he has not determined every Particular Circumstance of Worship, then he must stand charged with all the Absurdities, they object against their being left undetermined; and therefore if no such prescribed Form can be produced, (as 'tis infinitely certain none ever can) then let them consider what follows. So unhappy a thing is it; when men will needs be Disputing against Experience; whose Evidence is so powerful and forcible upon the minds of men, that Demonstration it self is not strong enough to cope with it: How much less the weak and puny Ar-

guments, wherewith these men assault it?

¶ 7. Sixthly, There is no particular Action but what is capable of a strange and unaccountable variety of Circumstances, nor any part of outward Worship but may be done after a thousand different Modes and Fashions; in that as every action is clothed with natural and emergent Circumstances, so is every Circumstance with its Circumstances, every one of which may be modified in sundry ways and manners. And therefore, in this infinite variety of things, the Laws of God prescribe only the General Lines of Duty, and rarely descend to their particular Determinations, but leave them to be determined by Prudence, and Discretion, by Choice, and Custom, by Laws, and Prescriptions, and by all those ways by which Humane Affairs are Governed and Transacted. Thus for example, The Divine Law has made Charity a standing and eternal Duty, but has left its particular ways of expression undetermined, and uncommanded: and 'tis indifferent whether it be done by Building of Colledges, or Churches, or Hospitals; by Repairing
of

of Bridges, or Rivers, or High-ways ; by Redeeming of Slaves and Prisoners ; by Hospitality to the Poor , or Provision for Orphans ; or by any other way of Publick or Private Bounty : and when a man's own thoughts have determined his own choice to one or more of these Particulars, even that is vested with a strange number of Accidents and Circumstances, which must of necessity be left entirely to the Conduct of his own Reason and Discretion. And the case is the same, as in all other Duties of Moral Vertue ; so in that of Religious Gratitude, or Divine Worship, this Duty it self is of a Natural and Essential Necessity ; but yet may and must be performed with an unconceivable variety of Dresses, Customs, and ways of Expression, that are left utterly free and undetermined in Scripture : any of which may be decently used, provided they do not make debasing Representations of God , wherein consists the proper Folly of Idolatry and Superstition. And all the advantages of Order and Solemnity , wherewith Religion may be prudently Adorned , are not only Lawful, but Decent , although they are not warranted by any Precept in the

Word of God ; that neither has, nor indeed can determine all Particular Modes and Circumstances of Worship, they are so various , and so changeable. And men may, with as much reason, search the Holy Records for the Methods of Legal Proceeding in our Common Law Courts , as for particular Rubricks and Prescriptions of all outward Forms and Circumstances of Publick Worship : So that what these men demand is so Unreasonable , that, considering the Nature of things, 'tis Impossible.

§ 8. And this may suffice, to demonstrate the unparallel'd Follies and Mischiefs of this Principle. Which being all I intend at present , I suppose it needless to engage in any further Scholastick Disputes, about the nature of Indifferent Actions , and some other less material Controversies that depend upon this ; partly because this Principle on which alone they stand, being removed , they become utterly groundless, and so by its Confutation are sufficiently Confuted ; and partly because all this has been so often, so fully, and so infinitely performed already. And of all the Controversies
that

that have ever been started in the world, it will be hard to find any that have been more fairly pursued, and satisfactorily decided, than this of the Church of *England*, against its Puritan Adversaries; that has all along been nothing else but a Dispute between Rational Learning, and Unreasonable Zeal. And it has been no less an Unhappiness, than it was a Condescension in the Defenders of our Church; that they have been forced to waste their Time and their Parts, in baffling the idle Cavils of a few Hot-headed and Brain-sick People. And there is scarce a greater Instance of the unreasonableness of Mankind, than these mens Folly, in persisting so obstinately in their old and pitiful Clamours, after they have been so Convincingly answered, and so Demonstratively confuted. And indeed how is it possible to satisfy such Unreasonable men, when their greatest Exception against the Constitutions of the Church has ever been no other than, That they were the Churches Constitutions? Inso-much, that if Authority should think good out of Compliance with their cross Demands to command what they now think necessary, that must then, ac-

According to their Principles, become unlawful: because (forsooth) where they take away the Liberty of an Action, they destroy its Lawfulness. Now what possibly could have betrayed men into so absurd a Perswasion, but a stubborn Resolution to be refractory to all Authority, and to be subject to nothing but their own Humours? And as long as they lie under the Power of this Perswasion, that they are obliged in Conscience to act contrary to whatever their Superiours Command them in the Worship of God, the Magistrate has no other way left to decoy them into Obedience, but by Forbidding what he would have them Do, and Commanding what he would have them Forbear; and then, if he will accept to be obeyed by Disobedience, he shall find them (good men) the most Obedient Subjects in the World.

¶ 9. But to return to what I was saying, instead of troubling my self with any further Confutation of so baffled a Cause, I shall rather choose to do it more briefly, and yet perhaps more effectually, by upbraiding them with their shameful Overthrows, and daring them

them but to look those Enemies in the face, that have so lamentably cowed them by so many absolute Triumphs and Victories : And, not to mention divers other Learned and Excellent Persons, I shall only single out that Famous Champion of our Church, Mr. *Hooker*; upon him let them try their Courage (though by so safe a Challenge I do but give proof of my own Cowardize.) How long has his incomparable Book of *Ecclesiastical Polity* bid shameful Defiance to the whole Party, and yet never found any so hardy as to venture upon an Encounter? Now this Authour being confessedly a Person of so much Learning, Candour, Judgment, and Ingenuity, and withal so highly prized, and insisted upon by the Regular and Obedient Sons of the Church, that they have in a manner cast the Issue of the whole Cause upon his Performance, What is the Reason he was never vouchsafed so much as the attempt of a just Reply? 'Tis apparent enough both by their Writings, and their Actions, that they have not wanted Zeal; and therefore that he has escaped so long free from all Contradiction, 'tis not for want of good Will, but Ability; not

because they would not, but because they were convinced they could not Confute him. So that the Book it self is as full and demonstrative a Confutation of their Cause, as the matters contained in it; *i. e.* 'tis Unanswerable, (and I know nothing can do it more Effectually, unless perhaps a Reply to it) and shall live an Eternal Shame and Reproach to their Cause, when that is dead; and would probably have been buried in utter Forgetfulness, were it not for this Trophy of Success against them: And therefore, until they can at least pretend to have returned some Satisfactory Answer to that Discourse, they prove nothing but their own Impudence; whilst they continually pelt us with their Pamphlets, and such little Exceptions, that have been so long since so Shamefully and Demonstratively baffled.

¶ 10. And whereas they are wont, in order to the making their Principles look more plausibly, to stuff their Discourses with Frequent and Tragical Declamations against Popery, Will-worship, Superstition, &c. I cannot perswade my self, 'tis worth the labour to wipe off such
idle

Idle Reproaches, by solemnly discouraging these matters ; both because this has been so frequently and fully performed already, and because, though these outcries have been made use of to affright silly People ; yet few, if any of their Ring-leaders are still so fond either to own this Charge against us , or to plead it in their own Justification. Only I cannot but observe of all these and the like Pretences, that we need not any stronger Arguments against themselves, than their own Objections against us. For if in this Case there be any Superstition, 'tis they that are guilty of it : For this Vice consists not so much in the Nature of things, as in the Apprehensions of men , when their minds are possess'd with weak and unworthy Conceits of God. Now he that Conforms to the Received Customs and Ceremonies of a Church , does it not so much upon the account of any intrinsic Value of the things themselves, as out of a sense of the Necessity of Order , and of the Duty of Obedience : whereas he that scrupulously refuses to Use and Practice them , takes a wrong Estimate of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, and imagins that God Judges
his

his Creatures by nice and pettish Laws, and lays a greater stress upon a doubtful or indifferent Ceremony, than upon the great Duty of Obedience, and the Peace and Tranquillity of the Church. So that the Principles upon which we proceed, are no other, than, That, as the Divine Law has prescribed the Substantial Duties of Religion; so it has left its Modes and Circumstances undetermined: but because every Action must be done some way or other, and be vested with some Circumstances or other; and because the generality of men are not so apt to be abused with Fantastick and Ridiculous Conceits in any thing, as in matters of Religion; therefore we think it necessary, for the prevention of all the Follies and Indecencies, that Ignorance and Superstitious Zeal would introduce into the Worship of God, That the Publick Laws should determine some Circumstances of Order and Decency; which have at least this Advantage, that they provide against the mischiefs of Disorder and Confusion: and therefore we place no Antecedent Necessity in any of the particular Rites and Ceremonies of our Church, but only think it highly Con-

Convenient, if not absolutely Necessary, that some be prescribed ; that there is an Handsomness and Beauty in these that are prescribed : and therefore, because 'tis necessary that some be determined, and because these are , rather than divers others, already settled , we think they have an indispenfable Necessity superinduced upon them, consequent to the Determinations of Authority. No man affirms, That we cannot serve God acceptably without a Surplice ; but yet, because 'tis but requisite that Publick Worship should be performed with Beauty nud Solemnity ; and because the use of this Vestment is but Handsom and Beautifull, and prevents Slovenliness and Indecency , 'tis but agreeable that it should be enjoyn'd, as any other Decent Habit might have been : and when this is singled out by Authority, it then becomes consequentially Necessary : Whereas those, who forbid Things Indifferent as Sinful , and lay Obligations upon Mens Consciences, to abstain from what is Innocent, and make that Necessary not to be done, which God has left at Liberty , and made Lawful to be done ; usurp upon mens Consciences,

by

by imposing Fetters on them ; where God has left them Free , and become guilty of the most palpable piece of Superstition, by teaching their own Prohibitions for Doctrines ; and so making it a Necessary Duty , and part of Divine Worship, to abstain from what God has no where forbidden ; and making it a Mortal and Damnable Sin, to do what is Innocent ; and supposing that God will, or at least justly may, inflict eternal Torments upon men , for making their Addresses to him, rather in a Cleanly white Vestment, than in a Taylors Cloke , or perhaps in Mechanical *Querpo*.

§ II. And then as for their out-cry against Will-worship , 'tis the very same with that against Superstition ; for 'tis one sort of it, and is Criminal no farther than 'tis Superstitious. Now when they exclaim against Superstition , they mean only that part of it that consists in Will-worship ; and when against Will-worship, 'tis only as 'tis a Branch of Superstition : So that these two impertinent Clamours signifie but the same thing under different Denominations , and so amount but to one. But however this is,
'tis

'tis certain, that Will-worship consists in nothing else than in mens making their own Fancies and Inventions Necessary Parts of Religion, whereby they make that requisite to procure the Divine Acceptance, that God has no where required; and 'tis the same thing whether this be done by Injunctions or Prohibitions: and they that affirm the doing or not doing of an Action which God has no where either Commanded, or Forbidden, to be necessary Duties, are equally guilty of this Crime: And therefore if these men make it necessary to forbear what God has no where forbidden, they teach their own Fancies for Doctrines, and impose something as a part of the Service of God, on their own, and other mens Consciences, that the Law of God has not imposed; and withal so unworthily mis-represent the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, as to labour to make the world believe, That God has such an abhorrency to a thing so innocent as a White Garment, That, to Worship him in it, is sufficient to bring us under his everlasting Wrath and Displeasure; for every thing that is sinful, is as well in their, as our, esteem Mortal and Damnable.

But

But then, as for our own parts, they cannot be more apparently guilty of this piece of Folly, than we are clear and innocent from its very Suspicion; because all Rituals, and Ceremonies, and Postures, and manners of Performing the outward Expressions of Devotion, are not in their own nature capable of being Parts of Religion; and therefore unless we used and imposed them as such, 'tis lamentably precarious to charge the determination of them with Will-worship; because that consists in making those things Parts of Religion, that God has not made so. So that when the Church expressly declares against this use of them, and only enjoins them as meer Circumstances of Religious Worship, 'tis Apparent that it cannot by imposing them, make any additions to the Worship of God, but only provides, That what God has required, be performed in a Decent and Orderly manner.

§ 12. And then as for Christian Liberty, Why should we suffer them so far to invade ours, as to renounce those things as Criminal, which we believe to be Innocent?

nocent? And if things indifferent when
 injoynd lose not only their Liberty, but
 their Lawfulness; then Why not when
 Forbidden, and that by an Incompetent
 Authority? When our Superiours im-
 pose Rules of Decency, and Laws of Dis-
 cipline, they do not infringe our Christi-
 an Liberty; because they do not abolish
 the Indifferency of things themselves,
 wherein alone it consisteth: and though
 they become thereby necessary Duties,
 'tis not from the Nature and Necessity of
 the Thing it self, but from the Obligati-
 ons of Obedience, or some emergent
 Reasons of Order and Decency: where-
 as nothing can be more plain, than that
 these men do not only abridge our Li-
 berty, but also lay Insolent Confin-
 ements upon the Supreme Power, by ma-
 king things Indifferent so absolutely Un-
 lawful, that they will not allow the just
 Commands of Lawful Authority suffi-
 cient to make them cease to be Sinful.
 How oft, and how plainly have they
 been told, that, when Authority injoyns
 things left Indifferent, and undetermined
 by the Word of God, 'tis so far from
 inroaching upon our Christian Liberty,
 that it rather confirms it? In that this
 supposes

supposes that the things themselves may, or may not be either done or injoyed, according to the Dictates of Prudence and Discretion ; but when they are once Determined by Publick Laws , though the Matter of the Law be Indifferent, yet Obedience to it is not. Whereas when they will not permit their Governours to injoyne these things, and if they do , will not obey their Injunctions , do they not apparently intrench upon our Liberty, by making what Christ has left Indifferent, necessary ; and, under pretenses of asserting their Christian Liberty , take upon them to confine the Rights of Authority ? But to all this, as evident as it is, nothing can make them attend ; but they still deasly proceed in their old Clamours : which is too clear an Argument, that 'tis not Reason that Dictates their Exceptions, but Humour, Prejudice, and Peevishness.

¶ 13. And then as for their Declamations against adding to the Law of God, to be short, I appeal to the Reason of all Mankind , Whether any men in the World are more notoriously guilty of Unwarrantable Additions than these,
who

who forbid those things as sinful, and consequently under pain of Damnation, which the Law of God has no where forbidden? What is it to teach the Commandments of men for Doctrines, but to teach those things to be the Law of God that are not so? And, What can more charge the Divine Law of Imperfection, than to teach that a man may perform all that it has commanded, and yet perish for not doing something, that it has not commanded? And so do they, who make it necessary not to do something, that God has left Indifferent. Whereas nothing can be more Unreasonable than to tax the Church of making Additions to the Law of God, because all her Laws are imposed, not as Laws of God, but as Laws of men, and so are not more lyable to this Charge than *Justinian's* Institutes, and *Littleton's* Tenures.

And then in the last place, as for their noise against Popery, (a term, that, as well as some other angry words, signifies any thing that some men dislike) I shall say no more, than, That we have most reason to raise this out-cry, when they take upon themselves (as well as the old Gen-

man at *Rome*) to controul the Laws of the *Secular Powers*. And what do they, but set up a Pope in every mans Conscience, whilst they Vest it with a Power of Countermanding the *Decrees of Princes* ? These things cannot but appear with an undeniable Evidence to any man, that is not invincibly either ignorant, or wilful, or both : and therefore 'tis time they should, at least for shame, if they will not for Conscience, cease to disturb the Church with Clamours, and Exceptions so miserably Impertinent, that I blush for having thus far pursued them with a serious Confutation. And therefore leaving them and their Impertinencies together, (for I despair of ever seeing these old and dear Acquaintances parted) I shall now address my self to clear off one more Material and more Plausible Objection, and so conclude this Particular. And 'tis this.

§ 14. 'Tis possible, the Magistrate may be deceived in his Determinations, and establish a Worship that is in its own Nature Sinful and Superstitious; in which case (if what I contend for be true) all his Subjects must either be Rebels,

bels, or Idolaters: if they Obey, they sin against God; if they Disobey, they sin against their Sovereign. This is the last Issue of all that is objected in this Controversie, and the only Argument that gives gloss and colour to all their other trifling Pretenses: And yet 'tis no more than what may be as fairly objected against all Government of Moral and Political Affairs; for there 'tis as possible, that the Supreme Power may be mistaken in its Judgment of Good and Evil; and yet no man will deny the Civil Power of Princes, because they are fallible, and may perhaps abuse it. And yet in this alone lies all the strength of this Objection against their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, because forsooth 'tis possible they may erre, and manage it to evil Purposes. But whatever force it carries in it, it rather strikes at the Divine Providence, than my Assertion, and charges that of being defective in making sufficient Provisions for the due Government of mankind, in that it has not set over us Infallible Judges and Governours: For unless all Magistrates be guided by an unerring Spirit, 'tis possible they may act against the ends of their Institution; and if this be a

sufficient Objection against their Authority, it must of necessity overthrow the Power of all fallible Judicatures, and make Governours as incompetent Judges in matters of Morality and Controversies of right and wrong, as in Articles of Faith and Religion. And therefore our Enquiry is, to find out the best way of settling the world, that the state of things is capable of: If indeed mankind were infallible, this Controversie were at an end; but seeing that all men are liable to Errors, and Mistakes, and seeing there is an absolute necessity of a Supreme Power in all Publick Affairs, our Question (I say) is, What is the most Prudent, and Expedient way of settling them; not that possibly might be, but that really is? And this (as I have already sufficiently proved) is, to devolve their management on the Supreme Civil Power; which though it may be imperfect, and liable to Errors, and Mistakes, yet 'tis the least so, and is a much better way to attain Publick Peace and Tranquillity, than if they were entirely left to the Ignorance and Folly of every Private man, which must of necessity be pregnant with all manner of Mischiefs and Confusions. So that
 this

this Method, I have assign'd, being comparatively the best way of Government of all Ecclesiastical, as well as Civil, Affairs is not to be rejected, because 'tis liable to some Inconveniences; but rather to be embraced above all others, because 'tis liable to incomparably the Fewest. And if it so happen, that some private Persons suffer wrong from this method of proceeding, yet this private injury has an ample Compensation from the Publick Benefit that arises from it; and when it so falls out that either the whole Society, or one Individual must suffer, 'tis easie to determine, that better One honest man perish, than a Million. The Inconveniences of a bad Government are Inconsiderable, in comparison to Anarchy and Confusion; and the evils, that fall upon particular men from its unskillful or irregular Administration, are vastly too little to weigh against the necessity of its Institution.

§ 15. And upon this Principle stands the Necessity of Subjection and Obedience to all Authority, in that, though its ill management may happen to bring many and great inconveniences upon the

Publick; yet they cannot equal the mischiefs of that Confusion, which must necessarily arise, if Subjects are warranted to disobey, or resist Government, whenever they shall apprehend 'tis ill administred. Perhaps never any Government was so good, as to be administred with exact Justice and Equity, nor any Governour so wise, as not to be chargeable with Faults and Miscarriages; and therefore if upon every Quarrel every Wise or Honest man can pick against the Laws of the Common-wealth, he may lawfully withdraw his Obedience, What can follow but a certain and unavoidable Dissolution of Government, when every man will be commanded by nothing, but his own Perswasions, that is Himself? And upon this account 'tis, that the Law of God has tied upon such an Absolute and indispenfable Subjection to Authority, which though it may be Mischievous, yet 'tis less so than Disobedience: and the world must be govern'd, as it can be, by Men, and not as it might be, by Angels. The management indeed of Humane Affairs is generally bad enough, but 'tis sa well as can probably be expected, if we consider the weakneses and imperfections

fections of Humane Nature : and therefore we must bear it as well as we can : because if we go about to alter any Present Settlement , we must almost of necessity make it Worse: And all the effects of such attempts have seldom ended in any thing else but perpetual Confusions, till things have at length resettled in the same, or as bad, (if not a worse) condition than they were in before. The miseries of Tyranny are less , than those of Anarchy; and therefore 'tis better to submit to the unreasonable Impositions of *Nero*, or *Caligula*, than to hazard the dissolution of the State , and consequently all the Calamities of War and Confusion , by denying our Subjection to Tyrants. And there never was any lawful Magistrate so bad , whose Laws and Government were not more conducive to the Preservation of the Common Good, than his Oppression was to subvert it : and 'tis wisely eligible to suffer a less Evil, rather than lose a greater Good. 'Tis a known, and a wise saying of *Tacitus*; *Bonos Principes voto expetere debemus, qualescunque pati ; & quomodo sterilitatem, aut nimios imbres, & cetera Natura mala, sic luxum & avaritiam dominantium tolerare:*

And this, in one word, is not only a satisfactory Answer, but an ample Confutation of that Pestilent Book, (*Vindicie contra Tyrannos*) the Scope whereof is, only to invite Subjects to Rebel against Tyrannical Government, by representing the Evils of Tyranny: which though they were as great, as he supposes them to be; yet they are abundantly less than those that follow upon Rebellion, as himself and his party were sufficiently taught by the Event. And for one Commonwealth, he can instance in, that has gain'd by Rebellion; 'tis easie to produce an hundred that it has hazarded, if not utterly ruined. And therefore this Author (not to mention *Mariana*, and *Buchanan*, and others) has perform'd nothing in behalf of his Cause, by displaying the miseries of a Tyrannical Power, unless he had withal evinced them to be more calamitous than those of War and Confusion. There is nothing in this World, that depends upon the freedom of man's will, can be so securely establish'd, as not to be liable to sad Inconveniences; and therefore that Constitution of Affairs is most eligible, that is liable to the Fewest. And upon this score, I say,

it is that the Divine Law has so severely injoin'd us to submit to the worst of Governours ; because, notwithstanding that Tyranny is an oppressing burden of Humane Life, yet 'tis less intolerable than a state of War and Confusion.

§ 16. But to speak more expressly to the particular matter in debate, 'Tis necessary the world must be govern'd ; govern'd it cannot be without Religion, and Religion, as harmless and peaceable as it is in it self, yet when mixt with the Follies and Passions of men , it does not usually inspire them with overmuch Gentleness and Goodness of Nature ; and therefore 'tis necessary that it submit to the same Authority, that commands over all the other Affections of the mind of man. And we may as well suppose all men just and honest, and upon that account cancel all the Laws of Equity, as suppose them wise, and sober in their Religious Conceits, and upon that score take off all restraints from the excesses and Enormities of Zeal. 'Tis therefore as necessary to the preservation of Publick Peace, that men should be govern'd in matters of Religion, as in all other common

common Affairs of Humane life. And as for all the Inconveniences that may follow from it, they are no other, than what belong to all manner of Government, and such as are, and must be, unavoidable as long as mankind is endued with Liberty of Will; for so long he cannot be intrusted with any Power, how good soever, that he may not abuse. And therefore for men to go about to abrogate the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Civil Magistrate, because he may abuse it to evil and irreligious ends, by establishing Idolatry, instead of the true Worship of God; (in which case 'tis pity that good men should be exposed to ruine, only for preserving a good Conscience) 'Tis just as reasonable as if they should cashier all manner of Government, and set men free from all Oaths and Obligations of Allegiance; because 'tis possible some Usurper may gain the Supreme Power, and then force his Subjects to abjure all their former Oaths to their Lawful Sovereign; and 'tis pity that men, of the Gallantest, and most honest Principles, should be Fined, Decimated, Hanged, Banish'd, and Murdered only for their Loyalty to their Prince.

And

And thus will the Parallel run equal in all Cases between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority of the Supreme Powers : both may be, and often are lamentably abused ; and therefore if that be reason enough to abolish one , 'tis so to abolish both : so that the whole Result of all amounts only to this Enquiry, Whether it would not be a Politick course to take away all Government , because all Government may be Abused ?

¶ 17. Though this be a sufficient Reply to the Objection , yet it will not be altogether impertinent or unnecessary to abet it with this one consideration more. That it may, and often does so happen, that 'tis necessary to punish men for such Perswasions into which they have perhaps innocently Abused themselves : for 'tis easily possible for well-meaning People through Ignorance and Inadvertency to be betrayed into such unhappy Errors, as may tend to the Publick Disturbance, which though it be not so much their Crime as Infelicity, yet is there no Remedy but it must expose them to the Correction of the Publick Rods and Axes. Magistrates are to take
care

care of the Common-wealth, and not of every Particular mans Concerns : And the end of all their Laws is to provide for the welfare of the Publick, that is their Charge, and that they must secure ; and if any harmless and well-meaning man make himself obnoxious to the Penalties of the Law, that is a misfortune they cannot prevent , and therefore must deal with him, as they do with all other Offenders ; that is, pity, and punish him. Private Interest must yield to Publick Good, and therefore , when they cannot stand together , and there is no Remedy but one must suffer , 'tis better certainly that One, or a Few , should perish than the whole Community. Neither is it possible that any Laws should be so warily contrived , but that some innocent Persons may sometimes fall under their Penalties ; yet, because 'tis more beneficial to the Publick Welfare, that now and then a Guiltless Person should suffer, than that all the Guilty should escape ; in that the former injures but one , the latter all : Therefore is it necessary to govern all Societies by Laws, and Penalties, without regard to the ill fortune that may befall a few Single Persons, which
can

can hardly be avoided whilst the Laws are in Force : and yet 'tis Necessary that either the same, or some other in their stead, be establish'd, that will be liable to the same Inconvenience. Besides, 'tis not unworthy Observation, that it is not so properly the end of Government to punish Enormities, as to prevent Disturbances ; and when they bring Malefactors to Justice (as we term it) they do not so much inflict a Punishment upon the Crime, (for that belongs peculiarly to the Cognizance of another Tribunal) as provide for the welfare of the Commonwealth, by cutting off such Persons as are Pests and Enemies to it, and by the example of their Punishment deter others from the like Practices. And therefore there are some Sins, of which Governours take not so much notice, that are more hainous in themselves, and in the sight of God, than others that they punish with Capital Inflictions ; because they are not in their own nature so destructive of the ends of Government, and the good of Publick Societies. So that actions being punishable by Humane Laws, not according to the Nature of the Crime, but of their ill Consequence

quence to the Publick , when any thing, that is otherwise even Innocent , is in this regard Injurious , it as much concerns Authority to give it check by severity of Laws and Punishments , as any the fowlest Immoralities. Temporal Punishments then are inflicted upon such Persons that are turbulent against prescribed Rules of Publick Worship , upon the same account , as they are against those that offend against all other Publick Edicts of Government : they are both equally intended, to secure the Publick Peace and Interest of the Society ; and when either of them are violated, they equally tend to its Disturbance : and therefore as mens actings against the Civil Laws of a Common-wealth are obnoxious to the Judgment of its Governours , for the same Reason are all their Offenses against its Ecclesiastical Laws liable to the Censure of the same Authority. So that the matter debated , in its last result , is not so much a question of Religion, as of Policy ; not so much of what is necessary to Faith, as to the Quiet and Preservation of a Common-wealth ; and 'tis possible a man may be a good Christian, and yet his Opinion be Intolerable,

lerable, upon the score of its being inconsistent with the Preservation of the Publick Peace, and the necessary ends of Government. For 'tis easily imaginable how an honest and well-meaning man may, through meer Ignorance, fall into such Errours, which though God will pardon, yet Governours must punish: His integrity may expiate the Crime, but cannot prevent the Mischief of his Errour. Nay so easie is it for men to deserve to be punished for their Consciences, that there is no Nation in the world, in which (were Government rightly understood and duly managed) Mistakes and Abuses of Religion would not supply the Gallies with vastly greater Numbers, than Villany.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Nature and Obligations of Scandal, and of the Absurdity of Pretending it , against the Commands of Lawful Authority.

The Contents.


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Affair,

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Sinful Disobedience. A further Account of their shameful Provarication. The ridiculousness of the Peoples pretending it concerning themselves, that they are Scandalized. By their avoiding private Offenses, they run into publick Scandals. They Scandalize their own weak Brethren most of all, by complying with them. Old and Inveterate Scandals are not to be complied with, but opposed: and such are those of the Non-Conformists. The Commands of Authority and the Obligations of Obedience infinitely outweigh, and utterly evacuate all the Pretenses of Scandal.

§ 1.  Hough the former Principle, viz. That no man may with a safe Conscience do any thing in the Worship of God, that is not Warranted by some Precept or Precedent in the Word of God, be riveted into the Peoples minds, as the first and Fundamental Principle of the Puritan Separation; yet their Leaders seem to be ashamed of their own Folly: and being driven from this, and all their other little holds and shelters, they have at length

length thought it the safest and the wisest course to fly to the Pretense of Scandal. This is their Fort-Royal, in which they have at last secured and entrench'd themselves. As for their own parts (they tell us) they are not so fond as to believe, That the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* are Superstitious, and Antichristian, and that themselves might lawfully use them, were it not that there are great numbers of sincere, but weak Christians that apprehend them to be sinful; and for this Reason, they dare not Conform to our Ceremonial Constitutions, for fear of Ensnaring and Scandalizing weak Consciences; which is, in the Apostles account of it, no less than Spiritual Murther. And whatever is due to Authority, the Souls of men are too high a Tribute. None can be more ready; than themselves, to submit to all Lawful Commands; but here they desire to be excused, when they cannot obey but at the Price of Souls. 'Tis a dreadful doom, that our Saviour has denounced against those, who offend any of his Little ones, *i. e.* Babes and Weaklings in Christianity: And therefore, though they would not stick to hazard their own

lives in Obedience to Authority, yet nothing can oblige them to be so cruel, and so uncharitable, as to destroy any for whom Christ died; which is certainly done by casting Snares and Scandals before their weak Brethren. This is the last refuge of the Leaders of the Separation, and therefore I cannot but think myself obliged to examine its Strength and Reasonableness; and I doubt not, but to make it appear as vain and frivolous, as all their other Cavils, and shuffling Pretences.

§ 2. Scandal then is a word of a large and ambiguous Signification, and the thing it imports is not determinately either Good or Evil, but is sometimes Innocent, and sometimes Criminal, according to the different nature of those things from whence it arises, or of those Circumstances wherewith it is attended; for in the full and proper extent of the word, 'tis any thing (whether Good, or Evil, or Indifferent) that occasions the Fall, or Sin of another. Now if the matter of the Scandal, *i. e.* that which occasions anothers Sin, be in it self Good and Vertuous, this casual event is not sufficient

cient to reflect any charge or disparagement upon it; and therefore 'tis in Scripture frequently attributed to the Best of Things, to the Cross of Christ, to Christ himself, and to the Grace of God. If it be a thing in it self Criminal, though it be chiefly blameable upon its own account, yet this usually aggravates and enhances the original Guilt of the action. But lastly, if it be a thing Indifferent, and a matter of Christian Liberty, then is it either Faultless, or Chargeable, according to its different Cases and Circumstances, as Christian Prudence and Discretion shall determine, so various and contingent a thing not being capable to be govern'd by any fix'd and settled measures. Some are scandalized out of Weakness, and some out of Peevishness; some before due information of their mistake, and some after it; some because they do not, and some because they will not understand. All which, with infinite other Circumstances, men ought to consider in the exercise of their Christian Liberty, and suitably to guide themselves by the same Rules of Wisdom and Charity, that determine them in all the other Affairs of humane life. For the action it

self is only the remote occasion, and not the immediate cause of the Scandal; in that, being in its own Nature Indifferent, and by consequence Innocent, it cannot be directly and from it self productive of any Criminal Effect: and therefore, its being abused and perverted to purposes and opportunities of Sin, is purely Accidental. And the proper and immediate cause of every mans falling, is, something within himself: 'Tis either Folly, or Malice, or Ignorance, or Wilfulness, too little Understanding, or too much Passion, that betray some men into Sin by occasion of other mens actions. So that the Schools distinction of Scandal into *Passive* or that which is taken, and *Active* or that which is given, is apparently false and impertinent, and is the main thing that has perplexed and intricated all Discourses of this Article: Because Scandal, properly so called, is never given, but when it is taken; as being only an occasion of Offense taken by one man from the Actions of another. Now if his taking Offense, where it was not given, proceeds from Weakness and Ignorance, then is his case pitiable, and a good natur'd man will out of Tenderness and Charity forbear

bear such things, as he seizes on to abuse to his own destruction: For all the obligations of Scandal proceed purely from that extraordinary height of Charity and Tenderness of Good Nature, that is so signally recommended in the Gospel; which will oblige us to forbear any action that we may lawfully omit, when we know it will prove an Occasion of Sin and Mischief to some well-meaning, but less knowing, Christians. But if it proceed from Humour, or Pride, or Willfulness, or any other vicious Principle, then is the man to be treated as a peevish and stubborn Person; and no man is bound to part with his own Freedom, because his Neighbour is Froward and Humorous: and if he be resolved to fall, there is no reason I should forego the use of my Liberty, because he is resolved to make that his stumbling-block. So that we see all Scandal is equally taken, but not equally Criminal: in that, some take it only because they are weak, and some because they are peevish; according to which different cases we are to behave ourselves, with a different demeanour in this Affair.

¶ 3. And for this we have variety of Examples in the Practice of the Apostles, whose actions were liable to the opposite Scandals of Jews and Gentiles. If they complied with the Jews in their rigorous Observation of the *Mosaick* Rites, this was a Scandal to the Gentiles, by leading them into a false and mischievous Opinion of their Necessity: If they did not comply, then that proved a Scandal to those Jews, that were not as yet fully instructed in the right nature, and extent of their Christian Liberty, and the Dissolution of the *Mosaick* Law; and so would be tempted to fall back from that Religion, that inclined men to a scorn and contempt of the Law of *Moses*. Now between these two Extremes they were forced to walk with great Prudence and Wariness, inclining sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other; as they apprehended most beneficial to the ends and Interests of Christianity. Thus though *St. Paul* condescended to the Circumcision of *Timothy*, to humour and gratifie the Jews, who could not be so suddenly wrought off from the Prejudices, and strong Impressions of their Education,

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and therefore were for a time indulged in the practice of their ancient Rites and Customs : Yet, when he was among the Gentiles, he would not be perswaded to yield so far to the Jewish Obstinacy, as to suffer the Circumcision of *Titus*, but opposed it with his utmost Zeal and Vehemence ; because this would, in probability, have frustrated the success of all his labour in propagating the Gospel among Foreign Nations ; if he who had before so vehemently asserted their Christian Liberty, and instructed them in their Freedom from the *Mosaic* Law, and particularly, from this Ceremony, should now seem inconsistent with himself, by acting directly contrary to his former Doctrine, and bringing men into a Subjection to the Law of *Moses*, after himself had so often declared its being revers'd and superannuated. For what else could be probably expected , than that his Gentile Proselytes being discouraged, partly by his Prevarication , and partly by the Weight of that Yoak , to which they foresaw, or at least suspected, they must submit, should be strongly tempted to an utter Apostacy ? And therefore, wisely weighing with himself, that the Scandal

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was less dangerous in angring the Jews, than in hazarding the Gentiles, he chose rather to leave them to their own peevishness, than to hazard the revolt of these, *Gal. 2. 4, 5.*

¶ 4. And this is the true Reason (as some learned men have observed) of this great Apostles different Deportment, in this particular, towards the Churches of *Rome* and *Galatia*; because in the *Roman* Church there lived no small number of natural Jews, who, when they were first converted to Christianity, were not so well instructed in the abrogation of the *Mosaick* Law. The Method, whereby the Apostles invited them at first to embrace the Christian Faith, was barely to convince them of its Evidence and Divine Authority; without taking any notice, whether their old Religion were thereby abrogated, or continued: For had they at the first attempt dealt roundly with them in that particular, that had been so far from winning their assent, that it had been absolutely the most effectual way to affright them from the Gospel. And from hence it came to pass, that there were dispersed among them so many Judaizing

daizing Christians, who, though they were sufficiently instructed in the positive Articles of the Christian Faith; yet not being so thoroughly informed as to the superannuating of those Legal Observances, they were as firmly wedded to them, as if they had still continued in the Jewish Religion: Therefore does the Apostle advise, That these weak and uninstructed Converts should be tenderly treated; and exhorts the more knowing Christians, for a while, to comply with their weakness and simplicity; till time, and better Information should wear off their old Prejudices, and at length bring them to a better Understanding of their own Liberty.

But then, as for the *Galatians*, when they hapned to fall into the same Error, he thought not fit to treat them with the same tenderness and Civility: But rather chides and lashes them out of their childish Folly; because (as St. *Chrysostome* observes) at their first Conversion they had been competently instructed in the extent of their Christian Liberty, and had already disclaimed all their Jewish Perswasions; and therefore, for them to relapse into the Errours of Judaism, could

could not proceed from Weakness, and want of Instruction, but from Lightness and Giddiness of Mind: a Vanity that deserved to be upbraided with as much briskness and vehemence of Satyr, as *St. Paul* has us'd in that Epistle. And upon this account arose the Quarrel between him and *St. Peter*, in that, *St. Peter* had not carried himself so prudently in the use of his Christian Liberty, as he might have done; their Controversie was not about an Article of Faith, or a prescribed Duty of Religion, but purely about an occasional and Changeable matter of Prudence. But to pass by this, and divers other particular Cases, to the same purpose, in the Writings of *St. Paul*, whose Practice in this Affair is the best Comment upon his Doctrine: the Result of what I have discoursed from him evidently amounts to these two Consequences, (1.) That the proper Obligations of Scandal are extended only to matters of an Indifferent and Arbitrary Nature. Those things that are absolutely Necessary, we are bound to do, whether they offend any man or no; and those that are absolutely Unlawful, we are bound to forbear, upon the score of stronger Obligations

gations than those of Scandal : and therefore its proper Scene must lie in things that are not determinately Good, or Evil. (2.) That the Cases, in which it is concern'd, are not capable of being determin'd by any unalterable Laws and Constitutions; and that we have no other Rules for the Government of our Actions in reference to it, but those of common Prudence and Discretion. And now, from this more general Account may we proceed, with more clearness and security, to some more close and particular Considerations, that immediately relate to this Affair, as 'tis pleaded by some men in justification of their present Schism.

§ 5. First, And here in the first place let me desire them, to consider how manifestly and scandalously they prevaricate with the World, in their management of this Apology, in that the Pretense is too narrow a Covering for their Practices. For however it may serve to excuse their refusal of Conformity in the Exercise of their Publick and Ministerial Function, which they must renounce, though to the ruine of their Families, to please the Brethren; yet how will this
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account for all their other Disorders and Irregularities of their Separation ? What has this to do with their Private Meetings and Conventicles, against the Commands of Publick Authority ? They plead it only to justify themselves in laying down their Ministry, and not to keep them from being present at our Assemblies in a private Capacity : (as they sometimes are.) Why therefore should they keep up such an apparent Separation , by gathering People into distinct Meetings of their own, when they might without any criminal Scandal to their Brethren, or violence to their own Consciences, be constant at our Congregations ? When themselves were (or at least thought they were) in Power , they did not think so slightly of unnecessary Separations, but provided against their very appearances and possibilities : Why therefore should they now make so light of exposing the Church to all the Distempers that naturally follow , upon making Parties and Divisions ? If there were nothing but Scandal in the Case, they would live quietly and conformably in a private Condition, though this might possibly restrain them from doing so in a publick

Publick Office. And one would think that such nice and tender natur'd People, that will undo themselves to please their Neighbours, should be wonderfully tender of giving needless Offense to their Governours.

And, whatever other Pretenses they make to excuse their Non-conformity, nothing can justify their Separation, but the unlawfulness of being present at our Congregations. For what, if they scruple to renounce the Covenant; is this any reason, why they should gather People into Conventicles, keep their private Meetings in time of Publick Service, affront the Laws and Constitutions of the Common-wealth, and encourage their Followers in a down-right Schism and Separation? It would be a pretty way of arguing, to hear one of them plead: I cannot renounce the Covenant, therefore I must keep a Conventicle; and yet this is their method of acting. And therefore they can never clear themselves of some odd Suspicions, unless they would frankly and openly declare their opinion of our Service: If they think it Unlawful, then let them own, and profess, and plead it; if Lawful, then let them justify them-

themselves, in that, when Lawful Authority requires them, and the People, to keep up a just and lawful Communion with the Church, yet they should notwithstanding keep up so wide a Schism; by gathering People out of Publick Congregations into Private Meetings. And could their credulous Disciples be but made sensible, how courslly they are impos'd upon by their Leaders, and how lamentably they juggle and dissemble with the world, they would then more abhor them for their Hypocrisie, than they now admire them for their Saint-like and demure Pretenses. For if they would perswade them to do what themselves would not scruple in their Circumstances, (*i. e.* to be of their own mind) this Schism would quickly be ended, and the Church settled. The only reason (say most of them) why they forsook their Ministry was, That they durst not Abjure the Covenant; dispense with them for this, and they are Conformists. But if that be the only thing they scruple, then, Why are they not Regular and Conformable in all other Particulars, against which they pretended no such Exceptions? And what does renouncing the

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the Covenant concern the People? and therefore how shall that excuse, or justify, them in their Separation? This thing has no Relation to the Divine Service, and therefore, however it may restrain men from something else, 'tis no motive to drive them from that. Now what can be more apparent, than that these men are resolved to comply with, and encourage, the People in a Wicked and Rebellious Schism, (for so it must be, if it be groundless and unwarrantable) by herding them into Conventicles for their own private ends, and that in spite of Authority? Whereas had they any true sense of Conscience and Ingenuity, they would labour to dispossess the people of their Mistakes, and to reconcile them to a fair and Candid Opinion of the Church, when she requires nothing of them but what they themselves are convinced in Conscience is Lawful, and Innocent. For if they valued the Peace of the Church, the Commands of Authority, and the Settlement of the Nation before their own Selfish ends, instead of keeping up Divisions (as 'tis evident they do by their Conventicles) they would be as zealous, as he that is molt, so to remove the grounds

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of Schism and Faction, and to reunite their Party to the Church, by perswading them to an orderly and Peaceable Conformity. Which if it be Innocent (as themselves believe it is) it must, in the present Circumstances of Affairs, be Necessary; if it be any mans Duty, to be Peaceable in the Church, and Obedient to Lawful Authority.

¶ 6. Secondly, How came the People to be Scandalized? by whom were they betrayed, and affrighted into their Mistakes? Who buzzed their Scruples, and Jealousies into their Heads? And, Who taught them to call our Ceremonies Popish, Superstitious, and Antichristian? What other inducement have they to dislike the Churches Constitutions, but meerly the Example of their Leaders? Their Practice is the only Foundation of the Peoples Opinion; and when their Flocks straggle from *our* Churches, 'tis only to follow *their* Pastours: They first lead the People into an Errour, and then this must be an Apology for themselves to follow them. And thus, whilst they dance in a Circle, 'tis no wonder, if at the same time the Preachers follow
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their People, and the People follow their Preachers. And therefore if the Godly Ministers, who dare not Conform for fear of Scandalizing the weak Brethren, would but venture to do it, the weak Brethren would cease to be Scandalized. So that these men first lay the Stumbling-Block in the Peoples way, and then, because it scares silly and timorous Souls, this serves for a Pretense to startle, and be astonish'd at it themselves, and withal to increase the Childish fears of the Multitude by their own seeming and counterfeited horror. With what a Shameless Brow do these men prevaricate with Publick Authority? They have deceived the People into a publick Errour, and then will not undeceive them for Fear of their Displeasure: And when they have possess'd their minds with unworthy Scruples, and Jealousies against the Commands of their Superiours, then must this Weakness of the People be made the Formal Excuse of their own Disobedience. And by this Artifice they prostitute the Reverence of all Government to the fortuitous Humour and Peevishness of their own Disciples; and so by making the Publick

Laws submit to the pleasure of those whom they govern, they put it in their own power to enact, or repeal them, as they please; and no Law shall have any force to bind the Subject, without their Approbation: Because 'tis in their own Power, when they please, to work Prejudices in the People against it; and therefore, if their being offended be sufficient to take off their Obligation, 'tis, or 'tis not a Law, only as themselves shall think good. And thus they first Govern the Common People, and then sooth and flatter their Pride, by inveigling them into a Conceit, that they are govern'd by them, and by this Stratagem they govern all.

But however, from whomsoever these good people learn'd their Idle and imaginary Scruples, the Offense they have taken against the Customs and Prescriptions of the Church, is either just and reasonable, or it is not: If the former, then they have rational grounds for their dislike and Separation; and if they have, then these men that think themselves bound to comply with them, even against the Commands of Authority, ought to plead those Reasons, and not merely Scandal,

to justify their Disobedience ; because they must carry in them an Obligation antecedent to that of Scandal ; in that they are supposed sufficient to warrant and patronize it : and therefore 'tis not that, but the Grounds, on which their dislike is founded , that are to be pleaded in their defense and justification. But if the latter, then is their Dislike Groundless, and Unreasonable : and if so, 'tis easy to determine that they ought rather to undeceive them, by discovering their Mistake, than to encourage them in their Sinful Disobedience, (for so it must be, if it be groundless) by Compliance with them. And by this means they will fairly discharge themselves from all danger of any Criminal Offense. For however Scandal groundlessly taken (and so it is always , because there is never any Reason to be offended at an Indifferent thing) may possibly lay a restraint upon my Liberty, till I have informed the Person of his Errour, and disavowed those ill Consequences he would draw from my Example ; and when I have so done, I have prevented the danger of Scandal, which always supposes Errour, Weakness, or Mistake of Conscience ;

ence ; and therefore when the Errour is discovered , and the Weakness removed , so is the Scandal too : and if he shall still pretend to be Scandalized , 'tis not because he is Weak , but Peevish ; and if after this I comply with him , and that against the commands of my Lawful Superiours , I shall disobey Authority , only , because my Neighbour is Unreasonable , *i. e.* for no Reason at all. And this further discovers , how shamelessly these men shuffle and prevaricate with the World ; in that when most of them have declared , in their private Discourses , that they are not so fond as to imagine our Ceremonies Unlawful , or Antichristian , and when their Grandees and Representatives have profess'd to Publick Authority in Solemn Conferences , that they scruple not these things upon their own account , but only for fear of giving Offense to some well-meaning People , that were unhappily possess'd with some odd and groundless jealousies against them. For if so , Then why are not these good People , that follow them , better informed ? Why do they not instruct them in the Truth , and disabuse them out of their
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False and Absurd Conceits? Why do they connive at their Pride and Presumption? or at least, Why do they not more smartly reprove them, for their Rashness to censure the actions of their Neighbours, to condemn, and revile the Wisdom of their Superiours, and to scorn the Knowledge of their Spiritual Instructours? Why do they not chide them out of their Malepert, Peevish, and Impatient Confidence, and, by convincing them at least of the possibility of their being deceived, reduce them to a more humble and Governable Temper? Why do they not teach them in plain terms that the establish'd Way of Worship is Lawful, and Innocent, and therefore that they ought not to forsake it, to the Disturbance of the Church, and Contempt of Authority? If they would but make it part of their business to undeceive the People, how easily would all their Stragling Followers return into the Communion of the Church? But they dare not let them know their Errours, lest they should forfeit both their Party, and their Reputation: And therefore, instead of that, they rather confirm them in their Mistakes, and in their own Defense,

are forced to perswade them, that they ought to be Scandalized. Insomuch, that it is not unusal to hear the foolish People pretend it concerning themselves, and to tell you that your Action is a Scandal to them: by which they mean either that it leads them into Sin, or that it makes them Angry: If the former, that is a ridiculous contradiction; for if they know how the Snare and Temptation is laid, then they know how to escape it; my action does not force them into the Sin, but only invites them to it, through their own mistake and folly: and therefore if they have discovered, by what mistake they are likely to be betrayed, they know, how to provide against the Danger: For, if they know their Duty in the case, how can they plead Scandal, when that supposes Ignorance? And however I behave myself, they know what they have to do themselves: If they do not, How can they say of themselves, that they are Scandalized; when by so saying they confess they are not? For that implies a knowledge how to do their Duty, and avoid the Danger. If the latter, *i. e.* that they are Angry, then all their meaning is, that I must part with my Liberty, and

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Disobey my Superiours, to please them; that their Saucy Humour must give me Law; that I must be their Slave, because they are Proud, and Insolent; and that they must gain a Power over me, because they are forward to censure mine Actions.

§ 7. Thirdly, We encounter Scandal with Scandal, and let the Guilt of all be discharged upon that side that occasions the most and the greatest Offenses: Now all the mischief they can pretend to ensue, in the present Constitution of Affairs, upon their Compliance with Authority, reaches no farther than the weak Brethren of their own Party; whereas by their refractory Disobedience they give Offense not only to them, but to all, both to the Jew, and to the Gentile, and to the Church of God. And, not to insist upon the advantages they give to Atheism and Popery, let me only mind them, that if the accidental Offense of the Judgments of some well-meaning, but less knowing, Christians of a Private Capacity pass a sufficient Obligation upon Conscience, to restrain it from any practice in it self Lawful; of how much more force

force must that Scandal be , that is given to Publick Authority , by denying Obedience to its Lawful Commands, and by consequence infringing its just Power in things not forbidden by any Divine Law ? Now if the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England* were in themselves apparently Evil , then their repugnancy to the Law of God were sufficient Objection both against their Practice, and their Imposition ; and their Scandal to weak and ignorant Christians were of small force, in comparison to their intrinsic, and unalterable unlawfulness : but , because this is not pretended in our present Case, What a shameful Scandal and Re-proach to Religion is it , to neglect the Necessary Duty of Obedience, and Subjection to Lawful Authority, under pretense of complying with the Weak and Groundless Scruples of some Private men ? 'Tis certainly past dispute, that the unreasonable Offense of some weaker Brethren cannot so strongly oblige our Consciences, as the Indispensable Command of obeying our Lawful Superiours. And 'tis a shame to demand , Whether the Judgment of a Lawful Magistrate have not more force and power over

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Conscience, than the Judgment of every Private Christian : If not, then may the Laws of Authority be cancell'd, and controul'd by the Folly and Ignorance of those that are Subject to them ; for meer Scandal arises only from the Folly and Ignorance of the Persons offended. For if there be any just and wise occasion of dislike, the action becomes primarily unlawful, not because 'tis Scandalous, but because 'tis antecedently Evil ; whereas meer and proper Scandal is only concern'd in things in themselves Indifferent : So that in this case all the Difficulty is, Whether is the greater Scandal, to do an Indifferent thing, when a Private Christian dislikes it ; or not to do it, when Publick Authority enjoyns it ? And certainly it can be no Controversie, Whether it be a sowler Reproach to Religion to disobey a Christian Magistrate in a thing Lawful and Indifferent, than to offend a Private Christian. And I may safely appeal to the Judgment of all wise and sober men, Whether the intoletable Waywardness of some nice and squeamish Consciences to the Commands of Just Authority be not a sowler and more notorious Scandal to Religion, than a modest

deft and humble Compliance with them, though not fo apparently useful and neceffary ?

And then, as for their own Weak Brethren, of whom they feem fo exceedingly tender, they can no way more Scandalize them, than by complying with them : By which they are tempted and betrayed into the greateft and moft Mifchievous Enormities ; for thereby they encourage their Folly, feed and cherifh their ungrounded Fancies, confirm them in a Falf Opinion of the Unlawfulnefs of their Superiours Commands, and fo lead them directly into the Sins of unwarrantable Schifm and Difobedience. How many feeble and deluded Souls are enticed, by the Reputation of their Example, to violate the Commands of Authority, and that, when themfelves are not convinced of their unlawfulness, and fo entangle themfelves in a complicated Sin, by Difobeying their Lawful Superiours, and that with a doubtful and unsatisfied Confcience ? They cannot be ignorant, that the greateft part of their Zealous Difciples are offended at the Laws and Conftitutions of the Church, for no other reafon, than becaufe they fee their
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Godly Ministers to slight them ; and therefore, unless their Example be sufficient to rescind the Lawful Commands of their Governours, they give them the most Criminal Scandal, by inviting them to the most Criminal Disobedience. So that all Circumstances fairly considered, the avoiding of Offenses will prove the most effectual inducement to Conformity : for this would take away the very Grounds and Foundations of Scandal, remove all our Differences , prevent much Trouble and more Sin, cure all our Schisms, Quarrels, and Divisions, banish our mutual Jealousies , Censures , and Animosities, and establish the Nation in a Firm and lasting Peace. In brief, the only Cause of all our Troubles and Disturbances, is, the inflexible Perverseness of about an hundred Proud , Ignorant, and Seditious Preachers ; against whom if the Severity of the Laws were particularly levell'd, How easie would it be in some competent time to reduce the People to a quiet and peaceable temper, and to make all our present Schisms (that may otherwise prove Eternal) expire with, or before, the present Age ? The want, or neglect, of which Method, is the

the only thing , that has given them so much strength, and so long a continuance.

§ 8. Fourthly, No man is bound to take notice of, or give place to old and inveterate Scandals, but rather ought, in defense of his Christian Liberty, to oppose them with a publick Defiance , and to shame those, that pretend them, out of their Confidence. For the only ground of Compliance and Condescension in these Cases is Tenderness and Compassion to some mens Infirmities ; and as long as I have reason to think this the only cause of their being Scandalized, so long am I bound by Charity and Good Nature to condescend to their Weaknesses , and no longer : for after they have had a competent time and means of better Information, I have reason enough to presume, that 'tis not Ignorance, that is the ground of their taking Offense, but Pride or Peevishness, or something Worse. So that all that is to be done in this Case, is to disabuse the weak by rectifying his Judgment, removing his Scruples, declaring the Innocence of my action, clearing it of all sinister Suspicions, and protesting against all those Abuses , he would put
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upon the Lawful use of my Christian Liberty : And when I have so done, I have cleared my self from all his ill-natured Jealousies and Surmises, and discharged all the Offices and Obligations of Charity. And if, after all this, my offended Neighbour shall still persevere in his perverse Misinterpretation of my actions, and pretend that they still gaul and ensnare his tender Conscience, the man is Peevish and Refractory, and only makes use of this precarious Pretense, to justify his Uncharitable Censures of my Innocent Liberty; and then am I so far from being under any obligation to comply with the Peevishness and Insolence of his Humour, that I am strongly bound to thwart and oppose it. For otherwise I should but betray my Christian Liberty to the Tyranny of his Wilful and Imperious Ignorance, and give Superstitious Folly the advantage and Authority of Prescription. For if that prevail in the practice of the world, and I must yield and condescend to it, because 'tis Stubborn, and Obstinate, it must, in process of time, gain the reputation of being the Custom and received Opinion of the Church; and when it can plead that,

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then it becomes Necessary : Inveterate Errours are ever sacred and venerable, and what prescription warrants, it always imposes : Custom ever did, and ever will rule and preside in the practices of men, because 'tis Popular ; and being ever attended with a numerous train of Followers, it grows Proud and Confident, and is not ashamed to upbraid free Reason with Singularity and Innovation. So that all I could gain, by an absolute resignation of my own Liberty to another mans Folly, would be only to give him a plausible Pretense to claim a right of Command and Dominion over me, and to make my self Subject to his Humour by my own Civility. And thus, though the Jews were in the beginning of Christianity for a time permitted the Rites and Customs of their Nation ; yet afterward when the Nature of the Christian Religion was, or might be, better understood, the Church did not think it owed them so much Civility : And if the Primitive Christians had not given Check to their Stubborn Perswasions, they had given them Authority ; and, by too long a Compliance, would have vouched and abetted their Errours, and adopted Judaism

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and cherish their Insolence, and only encourage them to proceed (if that be possible) to more Unreasonable Demands ; for upon the same Reason they insist upon these, they may, when they are granted them, go on to make new Remonstrances, *i. e.* upon no reason at all. And beside, this would but give the countenance of Authority to their Scruples and Superstitious Pretenses, and leave the Church of *England* under all those Calumnies to Posterity, with which themselves or their Followers labour to charge it, and oblige future Ages to admire and celebrate these Peevish and Seditious Persons as the Founders of a more Godly and thorough Reformation. Not to mention how much Princes have ever gain'd by their concessions to the demands of Fanatick Zealots, they may easily embolden, but hardly satisfy them ; and if they yield up but one Jewel of their Imperial Diadem to their Importunity, 'tis not usual for them to rest, till they have gain'd Crown and all, and perhaps the Head that wears it too ; for there is no end of the Madness of Unreasonable men. How happy would the world be, if wise men were but wise enough to be instructed by the

Mistress

daism into Christianity; and Circumcision not only might, but of necessity must, have been conveyed down to us from age to age, by as firm and uninterrupted a Tradition as Baptism.

And this shews us, how Wayward and Unreasonable those men are, who still persevere to object Scandal against the Churches Constitutions, after she has so often protested against this Exception by so many solemn Declarations. When at first it was pretended, it might perhaps for a while excuse, or alleviate their Disobedience; but after Authority has so sufficiently satisfied their Scruples, and removed their Suspicions, and so amply cleared the Innocence of its own Intentions, if men will still continue jealous and quarrellous, they may thank themselves if they smart for their own Presumption and Folly. And Princes have no reason to abridge themselves in the Exercise of their Lawful Power, only, because some of their Subjects will not learn to be Modest and Ingenuous. And if his Majesty should think good to condescend so far to these mens Peevishness, as to reverse his Laws against them out of compliance with them, this would but feed

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Mistress of Fools? But every Age lives as much at all adventure as if it were the first, without any regard to the Warnings and Experiences of all former Ages.

§ 9. Fifthly, The Commands of Authority, and the Obligations of Obedience, infinitely out-weigh, and utterly evacuate all the Pretences of Scandal. For the matters wherein Scandal is concern'd are only things Indifferent; but nothing that is not antecedently sinful remains so, after the commands of Lawful Authority are superinduced upon it: these change things indifferent, *as to their Nature*, into necessary Duties, *as to their Use*; and therefore place them beyond the reach of the Obligations of Scandal, that may in many Cases extend to the restraint of our Liberty, but never to the Prejudice and hinderance of our Duty: so that no Obedience, how offensive soever, unless it be upon some other account faulty, is capable of being made Criminal upon the score of Scandal; the Obligations whereof are but accidental and Occasional, whereas those of Obedience are of a Prime, absolute, and eternal Necessity. Princes are Gods Deputies, and Lieutenants

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nants here on earth, he vests them with their Power, and by his own Law binds us to obey theirs; and though their Decrees pass no direct Obligation upon the Consciences of men, yet the Divine Laws directly and immediately bind their Consciences to obey them; and God has annex'd the same Penalties to Disobedience to their Laws, as to his own. So that Obedience to all the lawful Commands of our Superiours is one part of our Duty to God, because our Obligation to it is tied upon us by his own immediate Command: and therefore if the duty of avoiding Scandal, that is of Compliance with my Neighbours weakness, be sufficient to excuse that of Obedience to Authority, 'tis so too to take off the immediate Obligations of God himself: So that when these two, the publick Commands of a Lawful Superiour, and the private Offense of an honest Neighbour countermand each other, if the latter prevail, then may it forbid what God has made a necessary Duty, and oblige us to disobey him out of Compliance with the Folly and Ignorance of men. How few are there of the Divine Laws more severe and peremptory, than those that

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Command Obedience to Authority? And therefore if we may decline this Duty only to avoid Scandal, Why not any? Why not all? This then is our Duty, and must be done; and as for all its casual and equivocal events, no mans Conscience is concern'd to provide against them. And if other men will be offended because I do my Duty, that is their fault and not mine; and better be the occasion of another mans Sin, than the Author of mine own. No mans Folly or Ignorance can cancel my Obligations to God, or God's Vicegerents; and in all cases where there is any competition between Scandal and a Command of God, or any other Lawful Authority, there is no other difficulty to be resolved, than, Whether I shall disobey God, or displease my foolish Neighbour? And 'tis (one would think) past all dispute, that when any thing is positively determin'd as a matter of Duty, the Obligations to Obedience in that particular are not, for that very reason, left to any man's Choice and Prudence (as all matters of Scandal are) but it must become in all Cases and Circumstances whatsoever, a Duty of a precise, absolute, and Indispensable Necessity.

And certainly God had made but odd provision for the Government of the World, if he should allow one Subject, for the pleasure of another, to derogate from the Authority of Lawful Superiours, and permit them the liberty to disobey the Commands of Governours, rather than displease one another : for this must unavoidably end in an utter Dissolution of all Government, and devolve the Supremacy entirely upon every Private man, that either has or can pretend to have a weak and a tender Conscience. For if Scandal to weak and tender Consciences be of sufficient force to rescind the Obligatory Power of the Commands of Authority, then whoever either has, or can pretend to a weak Conscience, gains thereby an absolute Sovereignty over all his Superiours, and vests himself with a Power to dispense with or evacuate their Commands. So that in the issue of all, this Pretense puts it in the Power of any peevish or malevolent Person to cancel all the Decrees of Princes, and make his own Humour the Rule of all their Policy and Laws of Government, and become Superior to his own Superiours only by being Ignorant or Peevish. How is it possible

possible to make Authority more cheap and Contemptible (if men would study to weaken and disgrace it) than by making its Commands of less force, than the Folly or Perverseness of every arrogant Mechanick? And what can be more destructive of all manner of Government, than to make all the Rules of Order and Discipline less Sacred, than the whimsies of every Phantastick Zealot? In brief, the peace and quiet of honest men is likely to be mighty well secured, when Disobedience shall be thought the product of a more exact and tender Conscience; When to pick quarrels with the Laws, and make scruple of Obeying them shall be made the specifick Character of the Godly Party; and when giddy and humorous Zeal shall not only excuse, but hallow Disobedience; when every one, that has pride enough to fancy himself a Child of God, shall have Licence to despise Authority and do as he list. What an irresistible temptation is this to proud and zealous Enthusiasts, to affect being troublesome to Government, and disobedient to all the Laws of Discipline, when it shall pass for the result of a more extraordinary tenderness of Conscience?

What encouragement could men have to obey their Superiours, when to dispute and dislike their Laws shall be thought to proceed from a greater Holiness and a more exact Integrity? And what a resistless inducement is this to all Proud and Phantastick Zealots to remonstrate to the Wisdom of Authority, if thereby they may gain the Renown and Glory of a more conspicuous Godliness? If men would but consider the natural Consequences of this, and the like Pretenses, they could not but see how fatally and unavoidably they lead to Anarchy, and an utter Dissolution of all Government. Which mischief (as is notoriously apparent from the Premises) all the World can never prevent, if the Scandal of Private men may ever dispense with the Obligation of Publick Laws.

CHAP. VIII.


Of the Pretense of a Tender and Unsatisfied Conscience ; the Absurdity of Pleading it in Opposition to the Commands of Publick Authority.

The Contents.

THis pretense is but an after-game of Conscience. 'Tis a certain and unavoidable dissolution of Government. 'Tis a superannuated Pretense, and is become its own Confutation. Old Scruples proceed not from Tenderneſs, but Stubbornneſs of Conscience. This particularly ſhewn in their ſcruple of kneeling at the Communion. They affect their Scruples out of Pride and Vain-

Vain-glory. *Tenderness of Conscience* is so far from being the Reason of Disobedience, that it layes upon us the strongest Obligations to Obedience. A Tender Conscience is ever of a yielding and pliable Temper. When 'tis otherwise, 'tis nothing but Humour or Insolence, and is usually hardy enough not to scruple the greatest Villanies. The Commands of Publick Authority abrogate all Doubts and Scruples, and determine all Irresolution of Conscience. The matter of all Scruples is too small to weigh against the Sin and Mischief of Disobedience. The Apostles Apology, viz. We ought to obey God rather than men, holds only in matters of great and Apparent Duty, but not in Doubtful and Disputable Cases. Nothing more easie than to raise Scruples. No Law can escape them, this particularly shewn in our own Laws. When two Obligations interfere, the greater always cancels the less. Hence 'tis impossible for any man to be reduced into a Necessity of Sinning. Obedience to Publick Authority is one of the greatest and most indispensable Duties of Mankind, because most necessary to their well-

well-being. To act against our own Scruples, out of Obedience to Authority, is an eminent instance of Vertue. In cases of a Publick Concern, men are to be govern'd not by their own Private, but by the Publick Judgment. In these matters the Commands of Publick Authority are the Supreme Rules of Conscience. There is a vast difference between Liberty and Authority of Conscience. The Puritans Tenderness of Conscience is one of the vankest sort of Heresies. Wherefore 'tis absolutely necessary for Authority to Command things Indifferent. The Conclusion of all.

¶ 1.  HE last Refuge for Godly Disobedience is the Pretense of a Doubtful, Scrupulous, and Unsatisfied Conscience; for (say they) though we cannot positively Condemn the Ceremonial Constitutions of the Church, as things in themselves Unlawful, yet Unlawful they are to us, whose Consciences are not sufficiently satisfied concerning them; because whatsoever is done with a doubting Conscience, *i. e.* without Faith, or a full

full Perswasion of mind , is done against it : according to that Clear and Unquestionable Maxim of *St. Paul*, *whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin.*

But this Precarious Pretense, as well as that of Scandal, is but an After-game of Conscience ; they first resolved to Quarrel our Constitutions, and then 'tis an easie matter to want satisfaction about them ; and when mens Arguments depend upon their Wills, 'tis in their own Power only to repeal them, and all the Reason in the world can never cure Wilful and Artificial Scruples. However, if the Obligation of Laws must yield to that of a Weak and Tender Conscience, how impregnable is every man, that has a mind to Disobey, arm'd against all the Commands of his Superiours ? No Authority shall be able to govern him, farther than himself pleases, and if he dislike the Law, he is sufficiently excused from all Obligations to Obedience ; and no Laws shall ever be able to oblige any man, that either has, or can pretend to a Weak Conscience : For seeing no man can discern the Reality of mens Pretensions, 'tis all one to the Concernments of Government, whether the Tenderneſs
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of Conscience, that men plead to excuse their Disobedience, be Serious or Counterfeit : For, whether it be so, or so, 'tis directly contrary to all the Ends and Interests of Government. And if it be admitted for a sufficient excuse to Disobey, 'tis an Effectual and Incurable Dissolution of all the Force of Laws, and makes them obligatory then only when every man pleases; and he that will may obey, and he that will not may choose; seeing 'tis so easie for any man, that has no Inclination to the Law, to claim the Inviolable Priviledge of a Tender Conscience : So that to make Provviso's for Tender Consciences, is to abate the whole Law; seeing it gives every man Liberty to exempt himself, and if he dislike the Law, he is under no Obligation to Obey it. But suppose this Pretense to be serious without Design or Disguise, is it fit the Laws of the Common-wealth should ask leave of every Ignorant, and Well-meaning man, Whether they shall be Laws or no ? A weak Conscience is the Product of a weak Understanding; and he is a very subtil man, that can find the Difference between a Tender Head, and a Tender Conscience : and therefore if
Princes

Princes must consult their Subjects Consciences in all their Laws, this would make all the Wisdom of Government submit to the Power of Folly and Ignorance. And when any Person Pleads Weakness or Tenderness of Conscience against the Obligation of any Law, his meaning is, that he is not of the same Judgment and Opinion with his Governours; and 'tis Wise, and Handsome, and becoming the Grandeur of Authority in all its Laws, to comply with the Learned Apprehensions of every Honest and Illiterate Peasant; who if he be not satisfied in their Determinations, may cancel their Obligation as to himself, and if they offer to Force this Honest man to Submission, they invade the Sacred and Inviolable Liberty of a Tender Conscience. So full of Anarchy are all these mens Pretenses. And therefore Governours must look to the Publick, and let Tender Consciences look to themselves. Laws must be of an Unyielding and Inflexible Temper, and not such soft and easie things, as to bend to every mans Humour, that they ought to Command. And unless Government be managed by some Settled Principles, it must for ever remain

remain weak and unfixed : Princes must
 not be diffident in their Rules , and Ma-
 xims of Policy ; but as they must set
 down some to themselves , so they must
 act up roundly to them. For all Changes
 of the Publick Laws and Methods of
 Policy sadly weaken, if they do not ut-
 terly unsettle the Common-wealth ; in
 that Prescription is, at least in the Practice
 of the World, the greatest Strength and
 Security of Government : 'tis indeed the
 Fountain of Authority , and the thing
 that vests Princes with their Preroga-
 tives ; and no Power, what Right or Ti-
 tle soever it may plead, can ever be firm-
 ly establish'd, till it can plead the War-
 rant and Authority of Prescription : And
 therefore if Princes will be Resolute (and,
 if they will Govern, so they must be)
 they may easily make the most Stubborn
 Consciences bend to their Commands ;
 but if they will not, they must submit
 themselves , and their Power, to all the
 Follies and Passions of their Subjects.
 For there are no conceits so extravagant,
 or so pernicious , that may not pass for
 Principles of Conscience. In brief, there
 is nothing so ungovernable as a Tender
 Conscience, or so restive and inflexible as
 Folly

Folly or Wickedness, when hardned with Religion : and therefore, instead of being complied with, they must be restrain'd with a more Peremptory and Unyielding Rigour, than naked and unsanctified Villany ; else will they quickly discover themselves to be Pregnant with greater and more Fatal Dangers.

¶ 2. This stale Pretense comes now too late, and is so ancient, that 'tis long since superannuated : Old Doubts and Scruples are like old Scandals worn out of date by Time and Experience : They are the natural Products of Ignorance, Weakness is their Parent, and Folly their Nurse ; and if they improve not into Confidence, they never survive their Infancy, but of themselves Vanish and Dissolve into nothing : And therefore this Pretense having out-lived it self, is become its own Answer and Confutation : Because men ought not, nay, they cannot remain so long under Uncertainties ; and 'tis impossible but they should before this time be competently Determined, as to the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of the things themselves : For if in so long a time they have not been able to discover
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that sinfulness in them they suspected, that is sufficient Evidence of their being Innocent ; because their Scruples have occasioned them to be so thoroughly sifted and examined : And if after all that hot and vehement Contention, that has been raised about them, it appears not yet wherein they are Criminal and Chargeable ; (for if it does, then the Doubt ceases, and the Certainty, not the Suspicion of Sin is to be objected) that is Presumption enough for any Modest and Sober man to conclude their Innocence ; and still to retain the Scruple is Folly and Peevishness, and then the Conscience is not Doubtful, but Obstinate and Peremptory : the man is resolved to cherish his Scruple, and persist in his Folly ; and if he will not be satisfied, 'tis not because he is Weak and Timorous, but because he is Stubborn and Disingenuous. And then he pretends Conscience only to vouch his Humour, and his Insolence, *i. e.* he is a Villain and an Hypocrite ; and is so far from deserving pity, especially from Authority, that no Offenders can more need or provoke their Severity ; in that, such men resolve to tire out their Governours by their inflexible Stubbornness, and to Affront
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their Laws with Trifles and contemptuous Exceptions.

At the first Settlement of a Church or New Religion, then indeed mens old Follies, Prejudices, and Weaknesses ought to be charitably considered; and they are not to be forced into New Customs and Usages, by too much Rigour and Severity; but ought to be gently and tenderly treated, till time and better Information may wear off their Scruples, and little Exceptions. And this was the Case of the Jews in the first Ages of Christianity, who were at first Indulged in their Weak and Trifling Conceits; because then they might reasonably be presumed to arise from a pitiable Ignorance and Dissettlement of Conscience: But as soon as the Abrogation of the *Mosaick* Institution was fully Declared and Acknowledged in the Church, they were brought under the Common Yoke of Discipline, and were not permitted to plead their Doubts and Scruples against Publick Laws and Constitutions. And this too is our Present Case, men labour to support an Old Schism by outworn Scruples and Jealousies, and will persevere in their Doubts, because they
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are resolved never to be satisfied ; for otherwise it were impossible, that after so much time , and so much Satisfaction they could still remain Unresolved. And if whole Armies of Reason have not been sufficient to chase away all their little and Imaginary Fears : yet methinks so long time, and so much Experience might be sufficient to convince them, that they are but Shadows, and Illusions of their own Melancholy Fancies ; for had they been Real and Substantial Things , 'tis impossible they should ever have escaped the Discovery of so long and so severe a Scrutiny. But, if nor Time, nor Reason can disabuse them, 'tis not their Ignorance, but their Obstinacy that is Invincible. Thus v. g. When to Kneel at the *Communion*, is in it self an Handsom and Decent Action, in that this Sacrament is the most Solemn piece of Gratitude, or Worship in the Christian Religion, and a peculiar Acknowledgment of our Vast and Un-speakable Obligations to our Redeemer ; and therefore to be performed with the Profoundest Reverence and Humility : and when these men themselves are not only ready to observe, but also to injoyn the same posture in their ordinary

Prayers, and other less Solemn Expressions of Devotion; and when the Power of the Church has actually Determined and Required this Reverent Posture, to stamp a peculiar Sacredness and Solemnity upon this Duty, no man can possibly now scruple its Practice without affected Contempt, and wilful Disobedience; because they cannot but be convinced (unless they are resolved against it) of the Vanity and Disingenuity of their old Pretense: namely, lest they should be interpreted to give Religious Worship to the *Elements*, and by lying Prostrate before the *Bread and Wine*, they should become guilty of *Idolatry*, in giving Divine Worship to a senseless piece of matter. For when they plead this Excuse for their Disobedience, they cannot but be conscious to themselves, that by it they do not only Despise, but Slander and Reproach the Laws, that they out-face and traduce Authority, and would force their Governours to believe and confess that they Favour what they expressly Abhor; seeing the very same Law that injoins this Ceremony, provides so expressly against this Abuse, and Declares so industriously, That 'tis so far from de-
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signing any Reverence to the Creatures
 themselves, that it abhors it ; but only
 requires it, as 'tis used in all other Religi-
 ous Addresses to Heaven. And, if not-
 withstanding all this, men will dread it as
 a piece of Idolatry , because (forsooth)
 it has been, or may be abused to that pur-
 pose, I say no more , than that if such
 thin and frivolous Scruples may out-
 weigh the Laws , and evacuate our Ob-
 ligations to Obedience , there are none
 in the World that are not as apparently
 liable to as disingenuous Surmises ; and
 they may as rationally forbear looking up
 towards Heaven in their Prayers , lest
 they should Worship the Clouds, or the
 Sun, Moon, and Stars. But the truth of
 it is , some men study for Impertinent
 Scruples, to ensnare themselves, and la-
 bour to raise great Doubts from little
 Reasons, and cannot be satisfied, because
 they will not ; they have enslaved them-
 selves to their Follies , and boar'd their
 ears to their Scruples , and are resolved
 to grow old in a voluntary Bondage to
 Trifles and Fooleries. Now 'tis necessary
 for people of this Humour to streighten
 the Laws, till they have made them too
 Severe and Rigorous to be obeyed , to

draw their knot, till it becomes troublesome and uneasie ; to put them upon the Wrack, and stretch them beyond, or beside their own Intention by rare and extraordinary-Cases , by harsh and unkind Interpretations, and by far fetch'd and disingenuous Suspensions ; and, under the shelter of such precarious Pretences as no Law can possibly avoid , they refuse the Liberty that is given them to obey the Laws, only that they may take the Licence to Disobey them. In brief, the main Mystery of all this Niceness (though themselves have not wit enough to observe its first causes) is, for the most part, nothing but a little Pride and Vain-glory : 'Tis a glorious thing to suffer for a tender Conscience, and therefore 'tis easie and natural for some people to affect some little Scruples against the Commands of Authority, thereby to make themselves obnoxious to some little Penalties ; and then what *Godly men* are they, that are so ready to be punished for a good Conscience ? How do such men hug and nurse their dear Scruple ? All the Reason, and all the Perswasion in the World shall never be able to wrest it from them. 'Tis their *Ephod and their Teraphim*, i. e. the only
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mark of their Godliness, and Symbol of their Religion; and if you rob them of that, you *take away their Gods: And what have they more?*

¶ 3. If my Conscience be really Weak and Tender, What can become it more than humble Obedience and Submission to Authority? Weakness of Conscience always proceeds in some measure from want of Wit; and therefore to make this the Pretense of Disobedience, is in effect to say, I will controul the Wisdom of my Superiours, because I have little or none my self. Certainly, where Persons have any serious sense of their own Ignorance, they can scarce have a stronger Obligation to Obedience; and they can never be so confident in any Action, as when they Obey; because then they have the Publick Wisdom to Warrant them, and their own Folly to Excuse them: that is, they follow the best Guide men are capable of, in their Circumstances. And a Subject that is Conscious of his own Weakness, when he resigns up himself to the Wisdom of his Superiours, in matters Doubtful and Disputable, is in effect governed by

the best and safest Dictates of his own Conscience ; which, unless it be hardened with Pride and Insolence , cannot but perswade him , that he ought to presume them more Competent Judges of the Fitness and expediency of Publick Laws, whose Work and Office it is to understand them, than himself, who is wholly ignorant of the Management and Trans-action of Publick Affairs. This is the most common Principle of Humane Life, and all men practise by it in all their Concerns, but those of Religion. And that is the Reason it has ever been debauch'd with so many Follies and Frenzies, because silly People will not submit their Consciences to any thing but their own giddy Imaginations : Whereas, if they would but condescend to the same Rules of Government in matters of Religion, as they do in all their other Affairs , Obedience to Authority might be secured without any violence to Conscience ; seeing no Conscience, that is acted by Wise and Sober Perswasions , will ever be stiff in Doubtful and Uncertain Cases against the Determinations of the Publick Wisdom : because such men being, sensible how unable they are to govern

vern themselves, they know they can never act more safely, than when they are Govern'd by their Superiours: and being they cannot pretend to trust confidently enough to their own Conduct, how can they proceed upon wiser and more reasonable Grounds, than by committing themselves to the Publick Wisdom? In which, though possibly they might be misguided, yet they may secure themselves, that, God who values Integrity more than Subtilty, will pardon their Weakness, and reward their Meekness and Humility. But for a man to plead Weakness of Conscience for Disobedience to Government, is just as if a Child in Minority should reject the advice of his Guardians, because he has not Wit enough to know, when he is well advised; or as if a Fool should refuse to be govern'd, because he has not reason enough to discern when he is well managed; or as if a Blind Man should not trust to the Conduct of a Guide, because he is not able to judge when he is misled.

Humility and Condescension are the most proper Duties of Weakness and Ignorance, and Meekness and Simplicity the only Ornaments of a Tender Conscience;

ence : and one would think that men, whose Confidence exceeds not their Wit, should be strangely wary of censuring the Wisdom of Authority. And therefore 'tis but a very odd Pretense to Weakness of Conscience, when it appears in nothing but being too strong for Government ; and that man that pretends to it, does not seriously believe himself, if he presumes he is wise enough to govern his Governours : and so does every one, that thinks the Perswasions of his own mind of sufficient force to cancel the Obligations of their Commands. 'Tis an handsome piece of Modesty for one, who pretends to Weakness of Conscience, when his Prince requires his Obedience to give him Counsel, to advise him how to Govern the Kingdom, to blame and Correct the Laws, and to tell him how this and the other might be mended. And, What can be more fulsome, than to see men, under Pretences of greater Strictness and Severity of Conscience, to cherish Stubbornness and Vanity, and to endure neither Laws nor Superiours, because they are proud enough to think themselves more Holy than their Neighbours ? What a Malepert and Insolent piece of Pride

Pride is it, for every Prating Gossip and Illiterate Mechanick (that can mark themselves with some Distinctive Names and Characters of Godliness) to Scoff and Jibe at the Wisdom of Publick Authority, to affront the Laws and Constitutions of a Church, to pity and disdain the lamentable Ignorance of Learned Men, and to Libel all sorts of People that are not of their own Rendezvous (especially their Superiours) with Slanders and Idle Stories? What strange effects are these of a diffident and timorous Conscience? A Conscience that knows it self to be acted by Certain and Infalible Principles, how could it be more Head-strong and Confident? And therefore, if we compare these mens Practices with their Pretences, What can be more evident, than that 'tis not Tendernefs of Conscience that emboldens them to fall out with all the World, but Pride, and Vanity, and Insolence? For nothing else could possibly drive them on with so peremptory a Sail, against so strong and so united a Torrent. For a Conscience, that is only Weak and Tender, is of a yielding and plyable Temper, 'tis Soft and Innocent, Modest and Teachable, apt to comply

ply with the Commands of its Superiours, and easily capable of all Impressions tending to Peace and Charity ; but when 'tis stubborn and Confident in its own Apprehensions, then 'tis not tender, but Hardy and Humoursome : And, as queasie as it is in reference to its Superiours Commands, 'tis usually strong enough to digest Rebellion and Villany ; and whilst it rises against a poor Innocent Ceremony, 'tis scarce ever stirr'd with Schism, Faction, and Cruelty. Now to permit these men their Liberty, who mistake Insolence for Tenderness of Conscience, (than which nothing more Easie or more Natural for People that are both Proud and Simple) is to suffer Ignorance to ride in Triumph, because 'tis Proud and Confident ; and to Indulge Zealous Ideots in their Folly, because they threaten Authority, to be Peevish and Scrupulous to their Laws, and to Infest their Government with a Sullen and Cross-grain'd Godliness (an Artifice not much unlike the Tricks of some Froward Children) and therefore such untoward and humourfome Saints must be lash'd out of their Sullenness (as Children are) into Compliance and
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better Manners ; otherwise they will be an eternal Annoyance to all Government, with the Childish and Whining Pretences of a Weak and Crasie Conscience. In brief, I appeal to all Mankind (that have but any tolerable Conception of the Nature and Design of Religion) Whether it be not much more becoming the Temper of a Christian Spirit, to comply with the Commands of their Superiours, that are not apparently Sinful , in order to the Peace and Settlement of the Church, than to Disturb its Quiet by a Stubborn and Peremptory Adherence, to our own Doubts and Scruples ? For, What is there in Christianity of greater Importance, than the Vertues of Meekness, Peaceableness, and Humility ? And in what can these great Duties more discover themselves, than in the Offices and Civilities of Humble Obedience ; that contains in it all that is most Amiable, and most Useful in the Christian Religion ? 'Tis Modesty, 'tis Meekness, 'tis Humility, 'tis Love, 'tis Peaceableness , 'tis Ingenuity ; 'Tis a Duty so pregnant with Vertue in it self , and of such Absolute Necessity to the Happiness of Mankind, that there is scarce any thing can come in

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Competition with it, whose Obligation it will not at the first Appearance utterly cancel and evacuate, (as I shall more fully Demonstrate in the ensuing Propositions) In the mean while we see, what is to be done in the Case of Tender Consciences : If they are acted by Calm, and Peaceable Principles, they will not desire Liberty; if they are not, they will not deserve it. For, if they are humble and modest, they will choose to submit to the Will of their Superiours, rather than, by thwarting them, do what in themselves lies to discompose the Publick Peace. And therefore if they will rather venture to embroyl the Common-wealth, and contradict Authority, than forego their own Peremptory Determinations, and make their Superiours comply and bend to their Confidence; 'tis because they are Criminally bold and imperious in their own Conceits, and are of a temper too Stubborn, Insolent, and Presumptuous to be endured in any Society of Men.

§ 4. Doubts and Scruples are so far from being sufficient Warranty of Disobedience, that they are out-weighed by the Obligations of the Law : for if I
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doubt concerning the Injustice of my Action, I must also of Necessity doubt of the Injustice of my Disobedience; and unless I am absolutely certain that the Law is Evil, I am sure Disobedience to it is: and therefore I am always as forcibly bound to obey a scrupled Law, for fear of the Sin of Disobedience, as to disobey it, for fear it commands an essential Evil: So that a doubting Conscience must always at least as much fright us from disobeying, as from obeying any Humane Law. Though indeed, if we would speak properly, the Commands of Authority perfectly determine, and evacuate all Doubtfulness and Irresolution of Conscience: For, if it before hung in suspense concerning the Lawfulness of the Action, and unresolved, Whether it were good or evil, as not having competent Reason to incline to one side rather than to the other; yet when Authority casts its Commands into the Scale (if in some mens Consciences they weigh any thing) they cannot but add Weight more than enough to determine the Judgment, and incline the Balance. For if the Reasons on both sides were equal before, than that side that gains this accession

cession has most Reason now. So that Laws do not force us to Obey them with a doubting Conscience, but remove our Doubts at the same time they require our Obedience ; because they destroy the equal probability of the two Opinions, and determine the Conscience to a Confidence of acting , by directing it to follow the Safest and most probable Perswasion : In that no Practice or Opinion, that is capable of Doubt or Uncertainty, can be of equal Importance with the Prime Duties of Obedience and Humility ; and the matter of all Doubts and Scruples is ever of too small and inconsiderable a Consequence to be laid in the Balance against the great and Weighty Mischiefs of Disobedience. If indeed the Commands of Authority injoyn'd any thing absolutely and apparently evil, and against the great and unalterable Rules of Truth and Goodness , in such exigents *Da veniam Imperator* would be a fair and civil Excuse : but matters of a less importance will not pay the Charges of a Persecution, 'tis not worth the while to suffer for little things ; and that man has but the just reward of his own Folly, that would suffer Martyrdom in the cause of

an indifferent Ceremony, or for the truth of a Metaphysical Notion. And the suggestion of *Optatus* to the *Donatists*, who were so forward to cast away their lives in defence of their little Schism, was smart and severe. *Nulli dictum est, nega Deum; nulli dictum est, incende Testamentum; nulli dictum est, aut thus pone, aut Basilicas dirue. Ista enim res solent Martyria generare.* Matters, wherein the Being of Religion, and the Truth of Christianity, were directly concern'd, were worth the dying for, and would quit the costs of Martyrdom; but no indifferent Rites or Ceremonies were of Value enough to pay for the lives of men: And the Zealots of the *Pars Donati*, who were so ambitious to suffer Imprisonment, Confiscation of Goods, Banishment, and Death it self, out of a pertinacious resolution against some establish'd Customs and usages of the Church, could never be rewarded in any other Heaven, but the Paradise of Fools. Things that are essentially Evil, no change or variety of Circumstances can make Good; and therefore no Commands of any Superiour can ever warrant or legitimate their Practice: but then

these are always matters of the greatest and most weighty Importance, and of an Apparent and palpable Obliquity, such as blasphemy, Murther, Injustice, Cruelty, Ingratitude, &c. that are so clearly and intrinsically Evil, that no end, how good or great soever, can ever carry with it goodness enough to abate or evacuate their Malice. But as for all matters, that are not so apparently good or evil, but are capable of Doubt and Uncertainty, their Morality is of so small Importance, that it can never stand in Competition with the Obligations and Conveniences of the great Duty of Obedience. And thus, when the Apostles were forbidden by the Jewish *Sanhedrim* to preach the Name of *Jesus*, *Acts* 5. 29. they desired to be excused, upon no other account but of an Express Command from God himself, in a matter of great Importance, and Apparent Necessity. Our Blessed Saviour coming into the world with a Commission from its Supreme Governour to make Laws, and the Holy Apostles having an Infallible Assurance of his Divine Authority from his Great, Manifest, and Undeniable Miracles (the most certain and unquestionable Credentials that
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Heaven can send to the Sons of men) they could not but lie under an indispensable Obligation to give assent to his Message, and Obedience to his Commands, and that out of Duty to the Supreme Governour of the Universe; from whose unquestionable Laws no other Authority can ever derogate, because 'tis all of an Inferiour Nature. But to apply this Rule, which the Apostles never made use of, but in a case of certain, absolute, and notorious Injustice, to matters of a small, doubtful, and uncertain Nature, is absolutely Inconsistent with the quiet of Government, and infinitely distant from the intention of the Apostles. Their Plea was in a Case of great, evident, and unquestionable Necessity: but what Warrant is that for my Disobedience, when I only fear, or fancy the Law to be unjust? Which, if it were so, is not of moment enough to weigh against the mischiefs and enormities, that follow upon Disobedience: And therefore in all doubtful and less considerable Cases, that Side, on which Obedience stands, must ever carry it; and no man that is either Wise or Good, will ever trouble his Governours, with nice and curious Disputes; the Au-

thority of the Law stifles all Scruples, and trifling Objections. And thus where there was no apparent Repugnancy to the Law of God, we find none more Compliant and Conformable in all other things than the Apostles, freely using any Customs of the Synagogue, or Jewish Church, that were not expressly cancell'd by some Divine Prohibition.

But further, this their Apology is as forcible a Plea in concerns of Civil Justice and Common Honesty, as in matters of Religion; it holds equally in both, in Cases of a certain and essential Injustice, and fails equally in both, in doubtful and less material Cases; and was as fairly urged by that Famous Lawyer *Papinian*, who upon this account, when the Emperour commanded him to defend and justify the lawfulness of Parricide, chose rather to dye, than to Patronize so monstrous a Villany: Here the Wickedness was great and palpable. But in matters more doubtful and less material, where the Case is nice and curious, and not capable of any great Interest, or great Reason, there Obedience outweighs and evacuates all Doubts, Jealousies, and Suspicions: and what Wise

or Honest man will offend, or Provoke his Superiour upon thin Pretences, and for little Regards? And if every man, that can raise Doubts, and Scruples, and nice Exceptions against a Law, shall therefore set himself free from its Obligation; then farewell all Peace, and all Government. For what more easie to any man, that understands the Fundamental Grounds and Reasons of Moral Equity, than to pick more material Quarrels against the Civil Laws of any Common-wealth, than our Adversaries can pretend to against our Ecclesiastical Constitutions? And now, shall a Philosopher be excused from Obedience to the Laws of his Countrey, because he thinks himself able to make exceptions to their Prudence and Convenience, and to prove them not so useful to the Publick, nor so agreeable to the Fundamental Rules of Natural Justice and Equity, as himself could have contrived? What if I am really perswaded, that I can raise much more considerable Objections against *Littletons Tenures*, than ever these men have, or shall be able to produce against our Ceremonial Constitutions? though it be easie to be mistaken in my Conceit, yet

whether I am, or am not, 'tis all one, if I am Confident. And now it would be mightily conducive to the Interests of Justice and Publick Peace for me, and all others of my Fond Perswasion in this particular, to make Remonstrances to the Laws of the Land, to Petition the King and Parliament; to leave us, at the Liberty of our own Conscience and Discretion, to follow the best Light, God has given us, for the Settlement of our own Estates; because we think we can do it more exactly according to the Laws of Natural Justice, than if we are tied up to the positive Laws of the Land. Thus that groundless and arbitrary Maxim of the Law, that *Inheritances may lineally descend, but not lineally ascend*, whereby the Father is made incapable of being immediate Heir to the Son, would be thought by a Philosopher prejudicial to one of the most equal and most ingenuous Laws of Nature, viz. the Gratitude of Children to Parents; which this Law seems in a great measure to hinder, by alienating those things from them, whereby we are best able to express it. What if I have been happy in a loving and tender Father, that has been strangely solicitous

citous to leave me furnished with all the Comforts and Conveniences of life, that declined not to forego any share of his own ease and happiness to procure mine, that has spent the greatest part of his care and industry to bless me, according to the proportion of his Abilities, with a good Fortune, and a good Education; and has, perhaps out of an over-tender solicitude for my welfare, reduced himself to great straits and exigences: How monstrous and unnatural must the contrivance of this Law appear to me, that, when the bounty of Providence has blest me with a fortune answerable to the Good Old Man's Desires and Endeavours, if I should happen to be cut off before him by an untimely Death, all that, whereby I am able to recompense his Fatherly Tenderness, should in the common and ordinary course of Law be conveyed from him to another Person; the Stream of whose Affections was confined to another Channel, and who, being much concern'd for his own Family, could in all probability be but little concern'd for me? What an unnatural and unjust Law is this that designs, as far as it can, to cut off the Streams of our Natural Af-

sections, and disposes of our Possessions contrary to the very first Tendencies, and Obligations of Nature? So easie a thing is it to talk little Plausibilities against any Laws, whose Obligation is Positive, and not of a Prime and absolute Necessity: And yet down-right Rebellion it would be, if I, or any man else, should refuse Subjection to these and the like Laws, upon these, and the like Pretences. And thus, we see, is the case all the way Equal between Laws Civil, and Laws Ecclesiastical. In all matters greatly and notoriously Wicked, the Nature of the Action outweighs the Duty of Obedience; but in all Cases less certain and less material, the Duty of Obedience outweighs the Nature of the Action. And this may suffice to shew, from the *Subject Matters* of all Doubts and Scruples, That they are not of Consideration great enough to be opposed to the Commands of Authority. And this leads me from the matter of a Scrupulous Conscience, to consider its Authority: And therefore,

§ 5. As the Objects of a Scrupulous Conscience are of too mean Importance, to weigh against the Mischiefs of Disobedience;

dience; so are its Obligations too weak, to prevail against the Commands of Publick Authority. For when two Contradictory Obligations happen to encounter, the greater ever cancels the less; because if all good be eligible, then so are all the degrees of Goodness too: and therefore to that side on which the greater good stands, our Duty must ever incline; otherwise we despise all those degrees of Goodness, it contains in it above the other. For in all the Rules of Goodness there is great inequality and variety of Degrees; some are prescribed for their own Native excellency and usefulness, and others purely for their subserviency to these: Now when a greater and a lesser virtue happen to clash, as it frequently falls out in the Transaction of Humane Affairs, there the Less always gives place to the Greater, because 'tis good only in order to it; and therefore where its Subordination ceases, there its Goodness ceases, and by consequence its Obligation. For no Subordinate or instrumental duties are absolutely commanded or commended, but become good or evil by their accidental Relations; their goodness is not intrinsic, but depends upon the Goodness of their End,

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and their being directed to a Good End, (if they are not intrinsically evil) makes them Vertuous; because their Morality is entirely Relative and Changeable, and so alters its colours of Good and Evil, by its several Aspects and Postures to various and different Ends: And therefore they never carry any Obligation in them, when they interfere with higher and more useful Duties. And hence it comes to pass, that 'tis absolutely Impossible for any man to be reduced into a necessity of sinning; because, though two Inferiour and Subordinate Duties may sometimes happen to be inconsistent with each other, or with some Duty of an absolute and unalterable goodness; yet the nature of things is so handsomely contrived, that 'tis utterly impossible that things should ever happen so crossly, as to make two essential and indispensable Duties stand at mutual Opposition: and therefore no man can ever be forced to act against one, out of Compliance with the other: and if there be any contrariety between a Natural and Instrumental Duty, there the Case is plain, that the Greater evacuates the Less; if between two instrumental Duties, it can scarce so fall out, but that
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some emergent Circumstances shall make one of them the more Necessary : but if they are both equally Eligible, there is no difficulty ; and a man may do as he pleases. 'Tis indeed possible for any man, by his own voluntary choice, to entangle himself in this sad Perplexity ; but there is no culpable error that is unavoidable, and every erroneous Conscience is voluntary and vincible : and if men will not part with their sinful Errours, 'tis not because they cannot, but because they will not avoid them. And if they resolve to abuse themselves, no wonder, if their sin be unavoidable ; but then the Necessity is the effect of their own Choice : and so all Sin is inevitable, when the peremptory determination of the Will has made it Necessary. But as for the nature of all the Laws of Goodness in themselves, they are so wisely contrived, that 'tis absolutely impossible any Circumstances should ever fall out so awkwardly, as to make one Sin the only way to escape another, or a necessary passage to a necessary Duty. Now to apply this General Rule of Conscience to our Particular case, there is not any Precept in the Gospel set down in more positive and unlimited

mitted expressions, or urged with more vehement motives and persuasions, than Obedience to Government; because there are but few, if any, Duties of a weightier and more important Necessity than this: And for this Reason is it, that God has injoy'n'd it with such an Absolute and unrestrained Severity, thereby to intimate that nothing can restrain the universality of its Obligatory Power, but evident and unquestionable Disobedience to himself. The Duty of Obedience is the Original and Fundamental Law of Humane Societies, and the only advantage that distinguishes Government from Anarchy. This takes away all Dissentions, by reducing every mans Private Will and Judgment to the determination of Publick Authority: whereas without it every single Person is his own Governour, and no man else has any Power or Command over his Actions, *i. e.* he is out of the State of Government, and Society. And for this Reason is Obedience, and Condescension to the Wisdom of Publick Authority, one of the most Absolute and Indispensable Duties of mankind, as being so indispensably Necessary to the Peace and Preservation of Humane Societies.

Societies. Now a Conscience, that will not stand to the Decrees and Determinations of its Governours, subverts the very Foundations of all Civil Society, that subsists upon no other Principle, but mens submitting their own Judgments to the decisions of Authority, in order to the publick Peace and Settlement; without which there must of necessity be eternal Disorders and Confusions. And therefore, where the Dictates of a private Conscience happen to thwart the Determinations of the publick Laws, they, in that case, lose their binding Power; because, if in that case they should oblige, it would unavoidably involve all Societies in perpetual Tumults and Disorders. Whereas the main end of all Divine, as well as Humane Laws is the prosperity and preservation of Humane Society: So that where any thing tends to the dissolution of Government, and undermining of Humane Happiness, though in other circumstances it were Vertuous, yet in this it becomes Criminal, as destroying a thing of greater Goodness than it self. And hence, though a doubtful and Scrupulous Conscience should oblige in all other Cases, yet, when its commands

run counter to the Commands of Authority, there its obligatory Power immediately ceases; because to act against it, is useful to vastly more Noble and excellent Purposes, than to comply with it: In that, every man that thwarts and disobeys the Laws of the Common-wealth, does his part to disturb its Publick Peace, that is maintained by nothing else but Obedience and Submission to its Laws. Now this is manifestly a bigger Mischief and Inconvenience, than the foregoing of any Doubts and Scruples can amount to: And therefore, unless Authority impose upon me something that carries with it more Evil and Mischief, than there is Convenience in the Peace and Happiness of the whole Society, I am indispensably bound to yield Obedience to his Commands: and though I scrupulously fear lest the Magistrates Injunctions should be superstitious, yet, because I am not sure they are so, and because a little irregularity in the external Expressions of Divine Worship carries with it less Mischief and Enormity, than the Disturbance of the Peace of Kingdoms, I am absolutely obliged to lay aside my Doubt, rather than disobey the Law; because to preserve

preserve it, naturally tends to vast Mischiefs and Confusions ; whereas the inconvenience of my acting against it is but Doubtful ; and though it were certain, yet 'tis small and comparatively Inconsiderable. And therefore to act against the inclinations of our own Doubts and Scruples, is so far from being Criminal, that 'tis an eminent instance of Vertue, and implies in it, besides its subserviency to the Welfare of Mankind, the great Duties of Modesty, Peaceableness, and Humility. And as for, what some are forward enough to object, that this is, to *do evil that good may come of it* ; 'tis a Vain and Frivolous Exception, and prevented in what I have already discoursed ; in that, that Rule is concerned only in things absolutely and essentially Evil, whose nature no Case can alter, no Circumstance can extenuate, and no End can sanctifie : but things, that are only subserviently good or evil, derive all their Vertue from the greater Vertue they wait upon ; and therefore where a meaner, or an instrumental Duty stands in competition with an essential Vertue, its contrariety destroys its goodness ; and instead of being less Vertuous, becomes altogether Sinful ;
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for though it have abstractedly some degrees of Goodness, yet when it chances to oppose any Duty, that has more, and more excellent degrees, it becomes Evil and unreasonable, by as many degrees as that excells it. And one would think this Case should be past Dispute, as to the matters of our present Controversie, that are of so vast a distance and disproportion; forasmuch as Obedience is a Vertue of so absolute Necessity, and so diffusive usefulness; whereas the goodness of those little things, they oppose to it, is so small, that 'tis confessedly scarce discernible; and their Consciences, as nice and curious as they are, are not able to determine positively, whether they are good or evil: and therefore, What a Prodigious Madness is it, to weigh such Trifling and Contemptible things against the vast Mischiefs and Inconveniences of Disobedience? The Voice of the Publick Laws cannot but drown the uncertain Whispers of a Tender Conscience; all its Scruples are hush'd and silenced by the Commands of Authority: it dares not whimper, when that forbids; and the Nod of a Prince awes it into Silence and Submission. But if they dare to murmur,

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and their proud stomachs will swell against the Rebukes of their Superiours, then there is no remedy but the Rod and Correction: they must be chastised out of their Peevishness, and lash'd into Obedience. In a word, though Religion so highly consults the Interests of Commonwealths, and is the greatest instrument of the Peace and Happiness of Kingdoms; yet so monstrously has it been abused by the Folly of some, and Wickedness of others, that nothing in the world has been the Mother of more mischief to Government: The main cause of which has been mens not observing the due scale and Subordination of Duties, and that, in case of Competition, the greater always destroys the less: For hence have they opposed the Laws; and by consequence the Peace of the Society, for an Opinion, or a Ceremony, or a Subordinate instrumental Duty; whereas, had they soberly considered the Important Necessity of their Obedience; they would scarce have found any Duty of moment enough to weigh against it. For seeing almost all Vertues are injoyn'd us in order to the Felicity of man, and seeing there is nothing more conducive to it, than that which tends to the Publick

Weal and Good of all ; and seeing this is the design , and natural tendency of the Publick Laws, and our Obedience to them ; that had need be hugely, certainly, and absolutely Evil, that cancels their Obligation, and dispenses with our Obedience ; and not a Form, or a Ceremony, or an outward expression , or any other Instrumental part of Religion. But some men think it better to be disputative than peaceable ; and that there is more Godliness in being captious and talkative, than in being Humble and Obedient : 'Tis a pleasure to them to be troublesome to Authority , they beat about, and search into every little corner, for Doubts and Exceptions against their Commands : and how do they triumph, when they can but start a Scruple ? They labour to stumble at Atomes , to boggle at Straws and Shadows ; and cherish their Scruples till they become as big as they are Unreasonable, and lay so much stress upon them, as to make them outweigh the greatest and most weighty things of the Law. And 'tis prodigiously strange (and yet as common too) to consider how most men, who pretend (and that perhaps sincerely) to great tenderness of

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Conscience, and Scruple Postures and Innocent Ceremonies, are so hardy as to digest the most Wicked and most Mischievous Villanies : they can dispense with Spightfulness, Malice, Disobedience, Schism, and disturbance of the Publick Peace, and all, to nourish a weak and an impotent Scruple ; and in pursuit of any little Conceit, they will run themselves into the greatest and most Palpable Enormities ; and will cherish it, till it weighs down the Peace of Kingdoms, and Fundamental Principles of common Honesty. Find me a man that is obstinately Scrupulous, and I will shew you one that is incurably Seditious ; and whoever will prefer his Scruples before the great Duties of Obedience, Peace, Quietness, and Humility, cannot avoid being often betrayed into Tumults and Seditions. But if we will resolve to be tender of our Obedience to the great, undoubted, and unalterable Commands of the Gospel ; that will defend our Consciences against the vexation of Scruples, and little inadvertencies, protect the Publick from all the disturbances of a Peevish and Wayward Godliness, and secure our acceptance

with God, without being so punctual and exact in the Offerings of Mint and Cummin.

§ 6. In Cases and Disputes of a Publick Concern, private men are not properly *sui Juris*, they have no Power over their own Actions, they are not to be directed by their own Judgments, or determined by their own Wills; but by the Commands and determinations of the Publick Conscience. And if there be any Sin in the Command, he that imposed it, shall answer for it; and not I, whose whole Duty 'tis to obey: The Commands of Authority will warrant my Obedience, my Obedience will hallow, or at least Excuse my Action, and so secure me from Sin, if not from Error; because I follow the best guide, and most probable Direction I am capable of: and though I may mistake, my Integrity shall preserve my Innocence. And in all doubtful and disputable Cases 'tis better to Err with Authority, than be in the Right against it; not only, because the danger of a little Error (and so it is, if it be disputable) is outweighed by the Importance of the great Duty of Obedience, that is more
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serviceable to the main Ends of Religion, than a more nice and exact way of Acting in opposition to Government ; but also, because they are to be supposed the fittest Judges of what tends to the Publick Good, whose Business it is to understand Publick Affairs : And therefore in all such matters, their Commands are the Supreme Rule of Conscience, as being more competent Judges of Publick Concerns, than mens own Private Perswasions ; and so must have a Superiour Authority over them, and bind them to yield and submit to their Determinations. And, if we take away this Condescension of our Private Consciences to Publick Authority, we immediately dissolve all Government ; for in case of Dissention, unless we submit our Perswasions to their Commands, their Commands must submit to our Perswasions. And then, let any man tell me, Wherein consists the Power of Princes, when it may be controul'd by every Subjects Opinion ? and what can follow but perfect Disorder and Confusion, when every man will be govern'd by nothing but his own Conceits ? And if Subjects may be allowed, to dispute the Prudence and Convenience of

all Laws , Government would be but a weak and helpless thing , and Princes would command at the Will and Pleasure of their Subjects. And, therefore People are never curious in their Exceptions against any Publick Laws ; unless in matters of Religion : and, in that Case they study for Reasons to Disobey , because it gratifies their Pride and Vanity, to seem more knowing than their Governours in that part of Wisdom , that they think most valuable. Self-conceit and spiritual Pride are strange Temptations to Disobedience ; and, were there not something of this in it , men would find out other Commands more liable to their Exceptions. For how seldom is it, that any Wars are Commenced upon just and warrantable Grounds ? And yet, how few are they , that take upon them to judge their Lawfulness ? All men here think their Prince's Command a sufficient Warrant to serve him, and satisfy themselves in this , that, in case the Cause prove to be unjust, the fault lies entirely upon him that Commands , and not at all on him who has nothing to do but Obey. And if it were otherwise, that no Subject were bound to take up Arms till
himself

himself had approved the Justness of the Cause, Common-wealths must be bravely secured, and their safety must lie at the mercy of every humorfome and Pragmatical Fellow. And yet to this piece of Arrogance do men tempt themselves, when they affect to be thought more Godly than their Neighbours. 'Tis a gallant thing to understand Religion better than their Superiours, and to pity their Ignorance in the great Mysteries of the Gospel, and by seeming to compassionate their Weakness, to despise their Authority. But if Princes will suffer themselves to be controul'd by the Pride and Insolence of these Contentious Zealots, they do but tempt them to slight both their Persons, and their Government; and if they will endure to be check'd in their Laws Spiritual, and Government of the Church, by every systematical Theologue, (and most, not to say the best, of our Adversaries are little better) they may as well bear, to see themselves affronted in their Laws Civil, and Government of the State by every Village-Attorney, and Solicitour.

Well then, all men that are in a state of Government are bound, in all matters

doubtful and disputable, to submit the dictates of Private Conscience to the Determinations of Publick Authority. Nor does this oblige man to act against the Dictates of his own Conscience, but only, by altering the Case, alters his Perswasions, *i. e.* though every man, considered absolutely and by himself, be bound to follow his own private judgment; yet when he is considered as the Member of a Society, that must be govern'd, then he must of necessity be bound to submit his own Private thoughts to Publick Determinations. And it is the Dictate of every mans Conscience, that is not turbulent and Seditious, that it ought in all things that are not of a great and Apparent Necessity, whatever its own private Judgment of them is, to acquiesce in the Determinations of its Governours, in order to Publick Peace and Unity. For unless this be done, there can be nothing but eternal Disorders and Confusions in the Church; in that, 'tis utterly impossible that all men should have the same Apprehensions of things; and (considering the Tempers and Passions of Mankind) as impossible, that they should not pursue their Differences and Controversies with

too much heat and vehemence : and therefore unless , whatever their own judgments and apprehensions be, they are bound in all such cases to acquiesce in the decisions and Determinations of the Governours of the Church, or Commonwealth, in order to its Peace and Settlement, there can be no possible way of avoiding Endless Squabbles and Confusions. And unless this be a Fundamental Rule and Dictate of every mans Conscience, that as he is bound in all doubtful cases to follow the *βέλτερον πορεύομαι*, or the best result of his own private Perswasions, where he neither has, nor is obliged to have , any other Guide or Rule of his Actions ; so he is bound to forego them all (provided his plain and Necessary Duty be secured) out of Obedience to Authority , and in order to the due Government of the Society ; there never can be any Peace or Settlement in any Church or Commonwealth in the World. And every Conscience, that is not thus perswaded, is upon that account to be reckon'd as Seditious and Unpeaceable, and so to be treated accordingly.

¶ 7. He that, with an implicite Faith
and

and Confidence, resigns up his own Reason to any Superiour on earth in all things is a Fool ; and he is as great a Fool, (to say no worse) that will do it in nothing : For as all men are immediately Subject to God alone, in matters of indispensable Duty, (that are not at all concern'd in our present Dispute) so are they, in all other things, to condescend to the Decrees and Determinations of their Lawful Superiours. Neither is this, to put men upon that Supreme Folly of renouncing the use and guidance of their own Reasons out of Obedience to any mans Infallibility. For by Reason we mean nothing but, the mind of man making use of the wisest and most prudential Methods , to guide it self in all its actions ; and therefore 'tis not confined to any sort of Maximes and Principles in Philosophy , but it extends it self to any knowledge that may be gained by Prudence, Experience, and Observation. And hence right Reason, when it is imployed about the actions of men, is nothing else but Prudence and Discretion : Now the Reason of any Wise and Sober man will tell him , that 'tis most Prudent, Discreet, and Reasonable, to forego his own private Perswasions

sions in things Doubtful and Disputable, out of Obedience to his Lawful Superiours ; because, without this the World can never be Govern'd. And supposing mens Judgments and Understandings to be never so much above the Jurisdiction of all Humane Authority , and that no man can be bound to submit his Reason to any thing but the Commands of God ; yet every man owes at least so much civility to the Will of his Prince , and the Peace of his Country , as to bring himself to a Compliance and Submission to the Publick Judgment , rather than to disturb the Publick Peace, for the gratification of his own Fancy and Opinion. Which is no enslaving of his Reason to any mans usurpation over his Faith and Conscience, but only a bringing it to a modest Compliance in order to the common Interests of Humane Society : and if it be not a Duty of Subjection, yet 'tis one of Peaceableness ; and if it be not grounded upon our Obligations to the Authority itself, yet 'tis most clearly derived from an higher Obligation, that all men are under , to advance the Welfare of mankind , and more particularly of that Society they live in, that is antecedent

dent to those of Government, which is instituted only in order to the Common Good: And therefore, though our Duty in such cases could not be deduced from our Obligation to any Humane Authority, yet it clearly arises from that Duty of Charity we owe to our Fellow Creatures. And though we are not to submit our understandings to any Humane Power, yet we are to the first and Fundamental Laws of Charity: which being one of the greatest Duties of mankind, 'tis but reasonable to forego all more private and inferiour Obligations, when they stand in competition with it. And thus *St. Paul*, notwithstanding he declaim'd with so much vehemence against the Observation of the Judaical Rites and Ceremonies, never scrupled to use them, as oft as it was serviceable to the advancement of the Christian Religion, and by consequence the Good of Mankind. And all I would perswade men to, is only that they would do as much out of Duty, as *St. Paul* did out of Civility; yet, as he complied with the Apprehensions of the Jews, retaining his own Private Judgment to himself, for the greater advantage of Religion; so they

they would, whatever their own Perswasions are of some things not clearly and absolutely sinful, comply with the Determinations of their Governours, when 'tis conducive to the nobler ends of Publick Peace and Tranquillity: a thing in it self so good and so necessary, that there are very few actions, that it will not render vertuous, whatever they are in themselves, whenever they happen to be useful and instrumental to its attainment. And therefore in all matters (that are no indispensable Duties of Religion) he, that acts cross to the Commands of Authority, has no sense either of the great ends of Order and Government, or great Duties of Humanity, Modesty, Peaceableness, Meekness, and Civility, *i. e.* he is a Proud and Factionous Person; and has no other motive so to do, but the pleasure of being Peevish and Disobedient.

In fine, there is a vast difference between Liberty, and Authority of Conscience; the former consists in the Freedom of a mans own Judgment, and of this no Magistrate can deprive us, in that he cannot tye up any mans understanding from judging of things as himself pleaseth: But as for the latter, that consists in the power

power over mens outward actions, and this, as far as it concerns all publick Affairs, every man does, and of necessity must pass away to the Rulers of that Society he lives in : because (though I have said it often enough already, yet too often I cannot say it, in that 'tis the main Key of the Controversie, and yet but little, if at all regarded by our Adversaries) the very nature of Government consists in nothing else but a Power of command over mens Actions ; and therefore unless all men grant it away to their Governours, they live not under Government, but in a state of Anarchy : Every man will be Prince and Monarch to himself, and as free from all commands, as if he lived out of all Society ; seeing only himself shall have any Real Dominion over his own Actions, and his Governours shall not have Power to Command him any thing, but what himself first thinks fit to do: And I hope I need not to prove, that this is a plain Dissolution of all Government. So that when men will be the absolute Masters of their own Actions, 'tis not the Freedom of Conscience, but its Power and Sovereignty, for which they contend ; they will endure none to rule
over

over them but themselves , and force Princes to submit their Laws to their Saucy and Imperious Humour : and 'tis this they mean by their Pretense to a Tender Conscience, *i. e.* a Conscience that Scruples to be Subject to Government, that will in spight of all Publick Laws be entirely at its own Liberty, that will not submit it self to any Rule but its own Private Perswasions , that affects to be nice and squeamish against all the Commands of its Superiours, and loves to censure them upon the lightest and most slender presumptions, and that will not yield up any thing of its own Phantastick Humour to its Princes will , or the Churches Peace, *i. e.* in effect, the Tenderness of their Consciences (for which forsooth they must be born with) consists in nothing else but their being the greatest and most Notorious Hereticks. For the rankest sort of Heresie is nothing but the product of a peevish and contentious Spirit ; and an Heretick is one that delights in Quarrels and Factions ; whence *Erasmus* renders *St. Paul's* *αἰσχυρὸς ἄνθρωπος* *Seclorum Author*, a man that loves to be the Leader of a Party : 'Tis peevishness and obstinacy of will that turns small

Errours

Errours into great Heresies. Pride and
 Passion, and whatsoever can make an
 Opinion vicious, are its Fundamental In-
 gredients, and give it its essential Forma-
 lity. This Vice lies not so much in the
 Opinions, as in the tempers of men, 'tis
 a stubborn and refractory disposition of
 mind, or a peremptoriness in a mans own
 Conceptions; and therefore 'tis by St.
Paul reckoned among the Fruits of the
 Flesh, as being a kind of brutish peevish-
 ness, that is directly opposed to that leni-
 ty and yieldingness of mind, that is one
 of the choicest Fruits of the Spirit;
 whence he advises not to confute, but to
 admonish such an one, *i. e.* that is quar-
 relsome and boisterous for every trifle,
 and every Fancy, because through Pride
 and Perverseness he is incapable of In-
 struction; and therefore can only be Ad-
 vised, and not Disputed into Sobriety. Or
 (to use the Phrase of St. *Paul*) he is
 ἐριςμῶς a fellow that is troublesome
 and contentious, especially about the ex-
 ternal Rites and Usages of the Church.
 And such a malepert *Non-Conformist* he
 supposes Disputing in the Church of *Co-
 rinth*, that their Women ought, con-
 trary to their received custom, to be un-
 covered

covered at *Divine Service* : but he takes him up with this short and peremptory answer, *If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God, i. e.* in things neither morally Good nor Evil (as few external Rites are) the Practice of the Church is the Warrant of their Lawfulness, and Reason of their Decency ; and that is satisfaction enough to any sober and peaceable mind : and he that shall refractorily persist to controul it, must be treated as a Disturber of the Peace, *i. e.* pitied and punished, as are all other turbulent and Seditious Persons. When mens Consciences are so squeamish or so humour-some, as that they will rise against the Customs and Injunctions of the Church they live in, she must scourge them into Order, and chastise them, not so much for their fond Perswasion, as for their troublesome Peevishness. And this use of the Churches Rods and Censures is so absolutely necessary, that 'tis the only effectual way to preserve her from Factions and Contentions ; not only because upon this sort of men softer Methods can make no impressions, but also because if we remove the limits and boundaries of

Discipline, there will be no end of the Follies and Frenzies of Brain-sick People : And when they are once let loose, who then can set bounds to the wildnesses of Godly Madness ? For this we have too clear a proof in the frantick Practices of our modern Sectaries, who, when they had enflamed their little Zeal against the Ceremonial Constitutions of our Church, run themselves into all manner of wild and extravagant Gestures : They measured the simplicity of Christs Worship by its opposition to all the Rules of Decency ; all Institutions of Order were unwarrantable Inventions, and Traditions of men ; all Custom was Superstition, and all Discipline was Popish and Antichristian. Novelty, how uncouth and Fantastick soever, was their only Rule of Decency ; and every Sect distinguish'd it self from all others, by some affected and new-fangled Singularity.

And from hence it is, that 'tis so absolutely Necessary, that Governours injoyn matters of no great moment, and consequence in themselves, thereby to avoid the evils that would naturally attend upon their being not injoyn'd ; so that, when they are determined, though perhaps they

they are not of any great use to the Commonwealth in themselves, yet they have at least this considerable usefulness, as to prevent many great mischiefs, that would probably follow from their being not determined: And therefore the goodness of all such Laws is to be valued, not so much by the Nature of the things that the Law commands, as by the mischiefs and evil effects, that it prevents or redresses. And thus the main Decency of Order and Uniformity in Divine Worship lies not so properly in the positive use of the Rites themselves, as in the Prevention of all the indecencies of Confusion; which could never be avoided, if there were not some peculiar Rites positively determined. So that the Law we see may be absolutely Necessary, when the thing it commands is but meerly Indifferent; because some things Necessary cannot be obtained, but by some things Indifferent: as in our present case, there is an absolute Necessity there should be Order and Decency in the Publick Worship, but Order and Decency there cannot be without the determination of some indifferent and particular Circumstances; because, if every man were left to his own fancy and

humour, there could be no remedy against eternal Follies and Confusions : So that 'tis in general necessary that some Circumstances be determined , though perhaps no one particular Circumstance can be necessary ; yet when any one is singled out by Authority , it gains as absolute a Necessity, as if it were so antecedently ; because though the thing it self be indifferent , yet the Order and Decency of Publick Worship is not : which yet can never be provided for, but by determining either this or some other Ceremony as perfectly Indifferent and Arbitrary. And now upon the Result of these particulars, I leave it first to Publick Authority to consider, Whether it be not a wonderfully wise piece of Good Nature, to be tender and indulgent to these poor tender Consciences ? and then, I leave it to all the World to judge, Whether ever any Church or Nation in the World has been so wofully disturbed upon such slender and frivolous Pretenses as ours ?

And thus have I at length finish'd what I designed and undertook , *i. e.* I have proved the Absolute Necessity of Governing mens Consciences and Perswasions in matters of Religion , and the unavoidable

avoidable dangers of Tolerating ; or keeping up Religious Differences ; have shewn , that there is not the least possibility of settling a Nation, but by Uniformity in Religious Worship ; that Religion may , and must be governed by the same Rules, as all other Affairs and Transactions of Humane Life ; and that nothing can do it but severe Laws , nor they neither, unless severely executed. And so I submit it to the consideration of Publick Authority , and am but little doubtful of the Approbation of all that are Friends to Peace and Government. But whatever the event may prove to others , 'tis not a little satisfaction that I reap to my self , in reflecting upon that Candour and Integrity , I have used through the whole Discourse : In that, as I have freely and impartially represented the most serious Result of mine own thoughts ; so withal have I been not a little solicitous, not to baulk any thing material in the Controversie ; have encountered all their most weighty and considerable Objections , have prevented all manner of Escapes and Subterfuges, and have not waved any thing because it was too hard to be answered ; though
some

some things I have, because too easie:
 And upon Review of the whole, I have
 Confidence (perhaps it may be Bold-
 ness) enough to Challenge the Reader, if
 he will but be as Ingenuous as he ought,
 to be as Severe as he will; and, in Defi-
 ance to all Enemies of Peace and Go-
 vernment, of what Name or Sect soever,
 to conclude all in the words of *Pilate* to
 the Jews, *what I have Written, I have*
Written.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 33. Line 23. for *Moralist* r. *Religion*. p. 58. l. 18. r. *Priviledge*. p. 60. l. ult. r. as before *railing*. p. 61. l. 7. r. *policy*. p. 69. l. 18. r. *demonstrations*. p. 70. l. 6. r. *terminated*. p. 89. l. 19. r. *humane*. p. 104. l. 26. r. *prudence*. p. 126. l. 2. r. *Common-wealths*. p. 185. l. 12. r. *humour*. p. 189. l. 3. for *Word* r. *Worship*. p. 195. l. 19. for *are* r. *are*. p. 202. l. 1. r. *Crea- tures*. p. 203. l. 15. for *and* r. *and*. p. 214. l. 28. for *as* r. *as*. p. 238. l. 1. for *their* r. *the*. p. 241. l. ult. for *most*, *so*. r. *most*, *so*. p. 248. l. 3. r. *unusual*. p. 277. l. 23. r. *themselves*. p. 290. l. 17. r. *preach*.
